Interview with Harold G. Josif

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

HAROLD G. JOSIF

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

Initial interview date: October 4, 1999

Q: Today is October 4, 1999. This is an interview with Harold G. Josif. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. To begin with, could you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family?

JOSIF: I was born in Moulmein, Burma in 1920. My parents were American Baptist missionaries in Burma. They had only been in the country half a year, but they stayed for 20 years in Burma. So, I was with them in their station, which at first was a town called Pyinmana, where they were learning the language, Burmese, and the ways of the country. After a year or two, they were transferred to Rangoon. That is where they lived the rest of their time in Burma.

In 1925, the family came back to the States for what was called a furlough. My father went to the University of Chicago and got an M.A. Then we returned to Burma in 1926. At this time, I was sent away to school. It was a hill station school where the mission had created a little American enclave. Taunggyi had an elevation of something like 3,000 feet, so it was a little more comfortable climatically. Most of my schoolmates were Americans, also from the mission. One or two were usually not. They were British. The school was a one-

classroom affair, one teacher for all grades (first through sixth grade). I went there for six years. There was a house mother who oversaw the boarding, rooming, and general discipline. It was all very interesting and I loved it.

Q: Could you tell me a bit about the background of your mother and father?

JOSIF: I would be glad to. My mother was born in DeKalb County, Illinois where her father was a farmer. He was of British extraction and her mother of German extraction. So, my mother was both. She went to college at Naperville, Illinois. There, she met my father, who was a fellow student at Northwestern College (later called North Central).

My father had a very interesting life. He was born of peasants in Romania. The family name was spelled Iosif, which is the Romanian way of spelling Joseph. His parents were Romanian on the father's side and German on the mother's side. He was discontented with the idea of growing up to be a farmer like his father. Also, he and his father were concerned about the possibility of his being drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army. So, like many other young men (He was 15 at the time.), he left with a couple of comrades and went to Paris. Crossing the Atlantic in steerage, he went first to Canton, Ohio to be with his half sister. He worked first at the Diebold safe factory there, becoming a cabinet maker. I'm not sure just why, but he then transferred to an academy connected with North Central College in Naperville, Illinois.

Q: Was that a denominational college?

JOSIF: Yes, I think it was Baptist. He was penniless and had to earn his room and board. He worked his way through this academy, which was sort of a high school, and then through college. He was interested in religion. His parents had been Romanian Orthodox, but it wasn't too much of a transition, I suppose, to become interested in other groups, particularly the German evangelical groups. He took courses in religion and started preaching even before he graduated from college.

So, he and my mother met there. After they both graduated, they married and held a pastorate in a very small hamlet in northern Illinois called Scarboro. While he was there, he applied to the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society to be a missionary in Burma. Some friend of his had told him that that was a good place to go, had a thriving mission and so on. So, he was interviewed and accepted. In 1919, they took a ship and got to Burma. I was born some six or seven months later.

To continue with my father, he was a natural linguist. I think this was partly because he grew up in a Transylvanian village that was about 1/3 Romanian, 1/3 German, and 1/3 Hungarian. He was certainly fluent in Romanian and German, and eventually in English and Burmese, a very difficult language. He became the director of education for the whole mission in Burma in 1935 and then executive secretary.

To give you an idea of the scope of American Baptist activity in Burma in the 1930s, there were about 200 Americans connected with the mission one way or another. They ran a press that printed Bibles and tracts in about 12 languages. All sorts of activities went on. There was educational activity. There was agricultural extension activity. There was medical activity. I was born in a mission hospital.

My mother was also a missionary. She was very active with women's groups. Of course, she had the chore of raising four kids. I was the oldest. So, that is my family.

When the family came back on furlough leave again in 1933, we lived in New York City in married students quarters across the street from Union Theological Seminary. Actually, our apartment was on the same block as Riverside Church. My parents were admirers of Harry Emerson Fosdick, the great preacher there who founded it. My father got a bachelor of divinity at Union Theological Seminary and concurrently took courses in education at Columbia University, where he received an Ed.D. We were there two years, perhaps partly because my mother had health problems.

In 1935, my parents went back to Burma and left my sister and me, who were the oldest two, in a home for missionary children in Granville, Ohio. This was run by the Baptists also.

Q: What do you recall about the time you were in Burma at the schoohill station and coming home with your parents?

JOSIF: I enjoyed the country. We kids in Taunggyi and also in Rangoon would go to the bazaar and do some haggling and acquire souvenirs and things, gifts for ourselves and others. We liked to hike and explore the woods. We played soccer, sometimes with Burmese. Then it was enjoyable to travel. My father liked to travel around the country as part of his duties. For instance, we took boat trips on the Irrawaddy River and its connecting canals. I remember a seaside vacation on the Tenasserim Coast and a trip with my father in his own car to the Salween River in eastern Burma. It was a colorful country and we were privileged people, being white and having things like cars.

On our trip home, we went first by ship to Calcutta and then by train up to New Delhi. That was interesting. I had a camera and started taking pictures. Then we went through the Suez Canal to Malta. We got to Romania eventually. We were there in Romania about a month. I had my 13th birthday there at some cousin's. I met my grandparents again. I had seen them actually six years earlier. Then we went to Germany. This was 1933, and the Nazis had just come to power. I remember, my father was concerned about that.

Because of my background and travel, I certainly inherited an interest in foreign affairs. I didn't decide to get into foreign affairs right away, but there was always an interest in the subject. I liked to collect stamps, as did most of the others at the home for missionary children at Granville.

Q: Also, you had quite a feel for geography.

JOSIF: Yes, if nothing else, the geography and a bit of the history of these places.

I will continue with Granville. Granville is a fine, small town of about 2,000 people. But it has Denison University, so you have quite a few cultural assets there that you wouldn't find in an ordinary town of that size. We had a good high school. Some of the students in my class were really first-rate. Two of them became nuclear physicists at Los Alamos during the war. We at the Home were required to go to church twice on Sunday and a prayer meeting once during the week. But it was all low pressure in the context. I was very active in all sorts of things. It's surprising to me that I was in the high school glee club, the drama club, the English club, the science club, and band and the orchestra, went out for the football team and the tennis team, was president of the Baptist youth organization, etc. I really scattered my energy around. One advantage was that I learned, for instance, that I didn't want to major in anything involving math. I probably wasn't very good at it. I felt that my interests were in societal matters - economics, politics, and so on. I was under pressure, the way most of us were there to go on to Denison, right in town. It is a Baptist university. Granville itself was a center for Baptists in all of Ohio. Actually, many Burma missionaries retired there, too. I knew my parents wanted me to go to Denison, but I wanted to get away from the close scrutiny that would result if I just stayed in Granville. So, I made a systematic search of qualities of other colleges that might be able to give me a scholarship. My parents couldn't afford more than just the bare minimum of help. It was pretty important to get a scholarship. I got a couple offers and decided to go to the University of Redlands in California, which was also a Baptist school. I had a full scholarship there, but still had to work. I managed to persuade several of my classmates at this home for missionary children to go with me. I think there were four of us altogether.

Q: When you were in the school before you went to college, how about interests, any particular teachers, reading, or anything? What sort of things did you like to read?

JOSIF: Well, because of all these activities, I don't think I was much of a serious reader. Then or perhaps earlier, I remember reading “Kim.” That was one of the more memorable

books that I ever read. I could visualize those dramatic scenes because of my experience in South Asia. I began to read people like Walter Lippmann and others who more or less tried to combine politics and morality or sociology and ethics. I began to have some ideas that were unorthodox considering my background - agnosticism, for instance. I was reluctant to discuss them with my parents because it was difficult. They were so far away for one thing. I wouldn't have minded talking it over with my father, but you can't do it by correspondence very easily. So, when I went to college, I decided to take some courses in philosophy and try to sort things out. My primary interest was in trying to find a rational system to settle all moral issues, naive as that may sound.

Q: You were at the University of Redlands from when to when?

JOSIF: I was there from 1937-1939, two years. I took courses in philosophy, but when you're a freshman and sophomore, they don't let you specialize very much. I enjoyed European history. That was quite formative for me. I went out for the tennis team and the poetry club and wrote some unrhymed free verse there. One of my reasons for not wanting to go to Denison was that, from what I had seen, the national fraternities really ruled the social life. I didn't like that. I was very equalitarian or something. I am sure I could have gotten into one of them, but I wouldn't have wanted to be in that social atmosphere. The students who weren't asked to get in, I thought, were considered second class.

In Redlands, southern California, they did have fraternities, but they were just local fraternities and didn't have that kind of influence. Eventually, in my second year there, I even joined one, which rather surprised my parents.

Q: While you were both in the Midwest and at Redlands, it was an interesting period in world and American history. You had the New Deal. You had isolationism. You had concern from some about Europe, Asia, and others who couldn't care less. Did intrude at all?

JOSIF: Yes. Along with listening to prize fights and maybe a few other radio shows, which we at the Home weren't supposed to listen to, I, like others, started listening to the Fireside Chats of Roosevelt. I remember that at Redlands, there was more interest in the Pacific situation than I had met with before. We had a speaker in the assembly who was very critical of the Japanese, who were then committing atrocities in China. I felt he had overdone it, but later realized that he wasn't exaggerating. Foreign affairs were still a peripheral interest. I was more interested in ethics and philosophy. I had the theory that I had developed - and that I began to see others had developed long before me - that the basic human motivation is the search for happiness, and that all of our decisions can be explained in terms of that. I carried this pretty far. Finally, my father wrote a very astute comment which made me set that theory aside and go on to other things. Namely, he said, “It's true, but it doesn't settle any practical questions of life. It's at such a level of generality that it doesn't really help you.”

I began to feel that Redlands was somewhat isolated from mainstream intellectual currents and that I ought to go to a school and graduate from a college that had a greater reputation. So, I transferred to the University of Chicago. This was a great economic risk, as there was no assurance of a scholarship. I actually did earn a scholarship while I was there, but again, I had to work for my room and board. That was pretty rough. Also, I worked under a federal student program where you could help a professor and earn a small amount of money.

Q: This was at the height of the Depression and also Hutchins and Adler.

JOSIF: Right. One of the reasons I went to Chicago was its reputation as a center of intellectual life. I took a course under Hutchins and Adler on Aristotle's Metaphysics. We only covered a few chapters of it in the whole course. That was very stimulating. It was amazing to see this young man, president of the University, and one of the leading

universities at that, and see the intellectual rigor of that class. It was a seminar. I really enjoyed that.

One of the rules at Chicago was that a philosophy major had to take 2/3 of his work in some other field - either physical sciences, biological sciences, humanities, or social sciences. I took it in the social sciences, with a smattering of economics, sociology, and history. Of course, Chicago was distinguished in those fields, too.

My father died in 1940 from the aftereffects of a minor operation. A blood clot reached his heart. So, my mother decided to come back to the States with her two younger kids. I became a pretty serious young man. I was the head man in the family, you might say.

Q: Before this happened, while you were at the University of Chicago and at Redlands, too, what sort of work were you doing on the side?

JOSIF: Well, at Redlands, I was a baker's assistant. I had to get up at some ungodly hour in the morning and go help the baker in the basement of the girls' dormitory, where the cafeteria was, so he could bake the rolls for breakfast. That was a discipline. I was not used to getting up early. I had become sort of a night person. I overslept a couple of times.

At Chicago, I earned my room and board by stoking the furnace, maintaining the heat in a brick building that was three stories high. It was a residence where they rented out rooms. I had the basement to myself, but it wasn't a very pleasant place to live. It was a good place to study maybe. Also, I did some work for professors at the Philosophy Department, bibliographical work in areas of my interest.

Q: This was at the height of the renown of the University of Chicago, the 100 great books and this type of thing. How did you find that type of education? Did that fit?

JOSIF: I thought it was a great idea. While I never cottoned up to the idea of getting a BA after only two years of intensive general education, I felt that one should read the

100 great books. I spent a good bit of my time, including vacation time, reading such books. I remember spending a lot of time reading Tolstoy's novels one summer. It was a broadening experience. I began to realize that my education was deficient in some areas. For instance, I never took any courses in literary criticism. Many of the books I was reading were either textbooks or books related to the courses I was taking, especially in sociology. I didn't read much in international relations at that time, except maybe again Walter Lippmann.

Q: Chicago was an interesting place at that time. You had architecture, poetry... There was the Chicago School of Literature. This was Chicago's golden age. Did that reflect at all at the University or were you off to yourself?

JOSIF: I certainly enjoyed the Chicago Institute of Art and went there quite frequently. I was active a bit in the International House on the campus and went to the local science museum on the mall there near the University, left over from the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Some of my reading was in art criticism. I remember especially reading about Cezanne and becoming a fan of his work. Of course, the Institute of Art had a great collection of French impressionists.

Q: What about social life, dating and that sort of thing? Did you have time for that?

JOSIF: Very little. I did take some dance classes at the International House, which was supposed to be a place to meet foreign students and for foreign students to get acclimated to American life. But my social life was rather limited. I had relatives in nearby rural Illinois, and a certain amount of contact out there. I worked one whole summer between high school and college on an uncle's farm in DeKalb County.

Q: You were at the University of Chicago for two years, is that right?

JOSIF: Yes. I got my BA there in 1941.

Library of Congress

Q: An interesting year to get out into the world.

JOSIF: Right. Yes, although I would have liked to have gone on to get an MA, I felt that I probably should, in view of the family situation, start working. Anyway, I had no money. I started working for an oil warehouse near Chicago for Esso, Standard Oil, rolling oil barrels. But then a friend was going to Washington and persuaded me to join him. I arrived here in August 1941 without a job or anything. The Depression was still on. I heard a glowing story about how you could earn quite a lot of money selling magazine subscriptions door to door, so I tried that. It was hard getting started, but I worked up to $40 a week, which seemed pretty good to me, yet I felt that I wasn't really cut out for high pressure salesmanship and that I had better find a steady job. I found that the best place to apply for a government job was the Library of Congress. You didn't have to pass the Civil Service Exam. They had some comparable requirement, but it was simpler somehow. I quite easily got a job as a messenger there. Although I had a BA, I was surprised that some of my fellow messengers had MAs. This shows how bad the Depression had been and still was.

At the library, I learned that the clerk typists were paid more than messengers, so I took the typing exam and passed that and got a raise. Then I applied for what they called P1, which was professional entry level, and entered the Legislative Reference Service as a junior analyst. One of my colleagues there was a sister of a girl that I had met at Chicago. We started dating and eventually married. Her name was Sylvia Estfan. We married in 1943 when I was in the Army.

I was at the Library of Congress from roughly December 1941 to September 1942, about 10 months.

Q: Where were you living at that time?

Library of Congress

JOSIF: First, I was living in Georgetown, but then on Capitol Hill, closer to the Library of Congress. I had several addresses during that period.

I was active in a union at the Library of Congress. Part of my background up to that point had been an interest in labor. I thought that this union was trying to improve working conditions. There were some pretty raw cases of nepotism at the Library. For instance, the daughter of a senator had a cushy job. This union local was also interested in international relations. It gave me a chance to express some of my ideas. For instance, I was in favor of independence for India and pushed through a resolution on that. That was becoming controversial because the British were at war with Hitler. But I was active mostly in passing around the meeting notices and the local's newsletter. My work at the Legislative Reference Service was varied. Among other things, I made abstracts of books and articles that would be of interest to Congress. They were usually on economics, labor, and social subjects. My work at the University of Chicago helped in that. I had a feeling for some of these political-economic issues. I think my work was appreciated. But it was very low-level work. I volunteered for the Navy during this period, but was turned down because of my eyesight.

In September 1942, the U.S. Army called me. I eventually wound up in places like Boca Raton. The Army discovered some thing I didn't know myself. I had a much better score in mechanical aptitude than anything else. I scored almost perfectly on the mechanical aptitude test. So, I was shunted into the Army Air Corps and given the basic training for aircraft maintenance, and some advanced training in instruments at places like Chanute Field, Illinois. I wound up at the Blytheville Air Base, which is in the northeastern corner of Arkansas, as a member of the crews that were maintaining pilot training planes. They had single and double engine planes to train Air Corps pilots. Since that was a semi-permanent posting, my girlfriend and I married. That is where we were married: Blytheville, Arkansas.

Q: What was her background?

JOSIF: She was born and raised in Manchester, New Hampshire of Arab-American parents. Her father had immigrated to the States as a young man from Lebanon and her mother from Mardin, which is now in Turkey, but was at that time an Arabic-speaking town. It is near the Syrian border. So, you could say she was Syrian in background. Her mother was a remarkable person. She was so active. She raised five kids. She was always doing volunteer work, helping immigrants to become American citizens and to overcome the problems of newly arrived people. She taught them English. If they were of Arab background, she might teach them in Arabic. That was her first language. She was active like that all through her life and received an award from the city for her civic accomplishments.

Her father had a pretty humble job. He was a wholesale grocer and sold very good quality products which he selected himself. But since it was a Mom and Pop (basically Pop) show, he never made a great deal of money.

My wife, after graduating from high school, went to a women's college in North Carolina and then transferred to Pembroke and graduated from there in 1941. She then came to Washington, as so many others did, about the time that things were opening up here. Of course, the war didn't start for us until December 1941, but even before then the word had gotten around that Washington was a good place to find a job, which was so important in those days. People who didn't go through it, I don't think have a realization how deep that Depression was. A lot of us were living hand to mouth a good bit of the time.

Q: In the Air Force, did you get attracted to the mechanical side of things?

JOSIF: It interested me enough. In the first place, I thought it was an opportunity to learn. We had some master sergeants at Blytheville who had been automobile mechanics. I learned quite a bit from them. On the political side, I began to read the papers and follow the radio news pretty closely and was asked to brief my colleagues on how the war was going. I remember fixing up charts and maps of war fronts, putting pins where the forces

were and that sort of thing. That was a purely voluntary activity on my part. I was content at Blytheville, but as usual, the Army transfers you around.

In 1944, the Army sent me to Casablanca, Cazes Air Force Base, where we had a huge operation. It was the center of the Air Transport Command for North Africa and Africa generally. A lot of transit was going on there. I saw the opportunity to improve my French and took lessons from a French lady who was married to a British businessman in town. I didn't make much progress, but I tried. Then I took the opportunity to travel around Morocco as much as I could, on leave. I went to Marrakech and Rabat, in particular, with friends. Finally, the historian at the base, who was in charge of writing a history of the Air Transport Command, noticed that here was a BA from the University of Chicago who was doing mechanical work; why doesn't he help out on our history? So, he had me transferred to his operation. I spent my last months in Casablanca working with the Historical Section there.

While I was overseas, my wife was at the Pentagon, working on military history also, an official history of the Persian Gulf Command, which was later published. Her contributions are acknowledged in the preface by the principal author.

As the war in Europe ended, various possibilities opened up. One was that I could get back to the States when my turn came. My wife was very keen about my taking the first opportunity. I was somewhat tempted by some of the unusual opportunities to do new, interesting Army jobs. I have forgotten what they were, but some involved a lot of travel, which I wanted to do. Eventually, I decided just to go back to the States as soon as possible, which was about February 1946.

I went back to the Library of Congress because they had been holding the job open for me all this time. They even gave me credit toward retirement for the three and a half years I was in the Army. I felt that was very nice of them. One of the things I did during this period, which was only about four and a half months, was to go to congressional hearings and

make extracts of the testimony of various witnesses. Then that was reviewed and made available to congressmen if they wanted to see what had gone on in such and such a hearing. I remember one of the hearings I covered was on the question of nationwide health coverage. Some of the issues of 1946 are still being discussed today, over 50 years later.

I haven't perhaps covered what you were interested in on this war period.

Q: What was your impression of Morocco while you were there?

JOSIF: I looked on it as an interesting example of European colonialism. There was a very thin layer of French-speaking Moroccans. The French hadn't been there very long and I don't think had been terribly effective in many ways. So there were two cultures. There was the Arabic culture, which most of the people represented, and there was the culture of a very small elite who had some relationship with Europeans. I was very impressed by the traditional architecture in Rabat particularly, the mosques, and some of the King's buildings in the capital. In Marrakech, the old mosque was fantastic and fascinating. The bazaar reminded me of my experiences in South Asia.

Q: What about smalltown America? The airfields you were mentioning where you were, places in Arkansas and all that, this must have been quite something to dump a military base in the middle of really a way out of the way place.

JOSIF: I think my memories are particularly of Blytheville, Arkansas because I was there longer than anywhere else. I had just been married and my wife got a job as a schoolteacher in the town high school. The principal couldn't get it out of her head that Sylvia Josif was a New Yorker. Everybody from the East was a New Yorker! So, we were, I think, considered a little alien. This was a town that had nothing except cotton. It was a cotton growing area. They knew all about cotton, but little about the outside world. It was very interesting. But there wasn't much contact between us and the community, except our landlady. We lived in town. I took flying lessons there and got a solo pilot's license. I rather

enjoyed that. Once in a while, one of the Army training instructors would take me up just for the ride and let me fly the plane briefly.

Of course, the Army itself was a cross-section of America in those days. I came to respect my fellow GIs as a group, even the Virginia illiterates at recruitment camp. And I detested GI-officer distinctions.

Maybe I should mention that the Air Force chose me to be an officer once and then backed off. Then we were periodically asked if we wanted to apply for other branches of the Service. I applied for the Armored Corps officer training school. Nothing materialized. I finally asked, “What is the difficulty?” People said I seemed to be “qualified,” but that there was a blue slip in my dossier. I never did find out exactly what it meant, but that apparently was the trouble. It may have been, for instance, that my father had been a subject at one time of the Austrians, who were under Germany. I still had a grandmother in German-held territory, too. Or it may have been something else, maybe my activity in this union at the Library of Congress.

Q: These things kind of stick.

JOSIF: The Army eventually removed the blue slip, and I got into thForeign Service all right. But as you say, something stuck.

Q: During your military time, did the Foreign Service, diplomatic service, enter your thoughts at all?

JOSIF: Yes, it did. I began to think seriously now, “What should I do?” Here I was, married. I had more responsibility than before. So, while I was in Casablanca, I did two things. I wrote to the Department and asked if there would be an opening. I also asked for information about taking the Foreign Service exam. Secondly, I did a little research and decided that it would be a good idea when I got out to get an MA in international relations. I heard that there was this new School of Advanced International Studies in Washington

(SAIS), founded by Dr. Harold Hoskins, who had just left Tufts. I applied there and was accepted. So, basically, when I got out of the Army, my four month stint at the Library of Congress was just filling the gap. Then I went to SAIS for a year using the GI Bill, which was a great help, of course. I took the Foreign Service exam that fall.

Q: What year was that?

JOSIF: That was 1946. The results didn't come out for a few months, but I think by spring of 1947, we knew that we had passed. There was a large number, at least 10 of us in that SAIS class of 40-some who passed the exam that year, partly because we were all relatively experienced. We weren't just fresh out of college. I met a number of my lifelong friends at SAIS. There was Hermann Eilts, for instance. The people in my FSI class included two who had been at SAIS with me: Bill Stedman and Ann Oehm, who later married Jim Knight, who was also a graduate with me. Perhaps you knew the Knights when you were in Dhahran. His career was with ARAMCO.At SAIS, I was taking courses in international relations, Middle East history, European history, international law, international economics, and French. Quite a good preparation. I did get my MA.

Q: There was both a written and an oral exam for the Foreign Service?

JOSIF: Yes.

Q: Do you recall the oral exam?

JOSIF: Yes. The written exam was a whole day. I understand thaduring the 1930s, it was a three-day operation.

Q: When I took it in the early 1950s, it was actually three and a half days. It was half a day for language and three days for exams. Then it switched over to a one-day one. But they were in a hurry. They really wanted to get going.

JOSIF: Yes. It was a time for expansion. We were opening new posts. My oral was chaired by Ambassador Joseph Greene. I didn't have any trouble except they wanted to test my Spanish. I had put down French as my first foreign language capability and then I mentioned Spanish simply because I had taken one year of it in college. I had never served in a Spanish area or anything. I was asked to translate something, and came to a sentence that I thought I understood, but wasn't sure. I was trying to be conservative, so I said, “I'd rather not guess.” One of the members urged me to try anyway, and I declined again. But I passed.

Q: How did your wife feel about this whole thing?

JOSIF: She was very much in favor. This was considered a good, steady job. She was very proud that I had been able to get into the Service. We hoped to stay in it for the rest of my career. Nowadays, I'm not so sure that is the attitude, but in those days, especially if you had been through the Depression, it was really desirable to keep a job. The FSI courses were interesting and bolstered our morale. There was a lecturer named Mr. Smith who was a professor at some college in upstate New York. He was an excellent linguist. He could tell from your accent, just talking to you a minute, what part of the country you were from and even within miles if it was upstate New York. I remember, one of his statements was “Don't worry about your accent. Any way you pronounce something is correct. You wouldn't have gotten this far if it weren't correct.” We took the usual basic courses in consular work, administration, and political and economic reporting. I was asked to make an oral report on Foreign Service retirement benefits. That seemed a little far out at the time, but we needed to know. It certainly turned out to be an excellent retirement system.

Q: In your class, was there sort of a feel about where they wanted to go? Was it “Wherever you want to send me?”

JOSIF: We were given an opportunity to ask. I asked for South Asia. Maybe I even mentioned India specifically. I remember a lot of people asked for Western European posts and some of the Latin American posts. There seemed to be some correlation between what you got and what you asked for. In my case, I got Karachi, Pakistan instead of India, but that was pretty close.

One of the things that impressed me about that experience in the Foreign Service class was that we were a cross section of Americans in many ways, Americans who had at least finished college. We had one man who was an agronomist. We had another who was a banker. In fact, he had been the vice president of a bank. We had many who had been officers in the armed services. We came from all kinds of colleges and universities, big Ivy League, but also some pretty small colleges from all over the country. So, that was a good feeling that we were going to represent the diversity of the United States.

Q: In 1946/1947, the new Foreign Service Act went in, which was really a much stronger act as far as giving home leave, payment to family, and all that.

JOSIF: Yes. We heard stories about how you had to pay for your home leave and things like that that were pretty harrowing, but we didn't have to go through it ourselves. One of the anachronisms that I did experience was to be handed a blank checkbook on the U.S. Treasury. I only cashed one of those checks, but I've often thought of how times have changed. Think of all the administrative apparatus that prevents you from doing that sort of thing nowadays.

Q: So, going to Karachi, how did you get there?

JOSIF: By ship from New York. There was a gentleman in New York who should be honored in the halls of the Foreign Service: Howard Fyfe.

Q: Oh, yes.

JOSIF: He was the New York dispatch agent. He was marvelous. He got our effects on the ship. He got us the passage. This was true on other occasions when we traveled through New York.

Q: He was an institution. He helped me, I know.

JOSIF: So we left on a ship from Brooklyn that went first to Beirut. That was great. We met my wife's father's relatives, in their village near Sidon. That was quite an eye-opener. The poverty of those mountain villagers... But also something of the cosmopolitan character of Beirut. It was really a delightful place in itself.Then we went through the Canal, and got to Karachi. It was in March of 1948. They put us up in what was called the Beach Luxury Hotel. We were the 13th guests to register. It had no beach. It looked out over a mangrove swamp. There was no luxury. But everything was new and exciting.

I was one of three junior officers who were sent out about the same time. The other two were Nick Thatcher, who later became ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and David Newsom, who had a very distinguished career. David and Jean Newsom offered to put us up in their home because the Beach Luxury Hotel was not a very agreeable place to stay for a long time. So, we were with them from March to August and got to know them very well. They are still our best friends from the Foreign Service. As I suppose many people have noted, you make perhaps your best friends in your first post and especially if it's a hardship post where you share things. It was rough in many ways. It was before the era of air conditioning. It hadn't reached the posts yet. So, in a climate such as Karachi, which is extremely humid and hot at times, you relied on fans, open windows, and loose clothing. But there was always a problem of gnats and so on. Somehow we all thrived. I was delighted at the post.

Q: You were there from 1948 to when?

JOSIF: I was there from 1948 to late 1949. It was 20 months altogether. The idea was that on your first overseas tour, you would serve at two posts and get the variety of experience. I was assigned then to Oporto, Portugal.

Q: You were in Pakistan. This was 1948. This must have been a very disjointed period in Pakistan. It became Pakistan in August 1947.

JOSIF: That's right.

Q: Could you talk about what you were seeing there?

JOSIF: It was a new post and it was a new country. It had just received independence and only by partition from the previous political entity, namely British India. The paramount question to me and, I think, the rest of us, was how would this new state do? How stable would it be? It was a peculiarity right off the bat because it was divided by 1,000 miles of another country. East Pakistan and West Pakistan were divided by India, which was a hostile state in their eyes. There were some people who certainly supported the new state because it was good for their careers. I think of the Muslim civil servants from the Indian Civil Service (ICS), for instance. They had been a minority and were not particularly high in the ICS as a rule, but now they had a whole new country, a whole new bureaucracy, to develop their careers in. They certainly benefitted. In general, I would say the well-educated had an opportunity here to flower. Businessmen had a chance to take over the businesses of the Hindus and Sikhs, who had been more prominent in business and who had fled to India.

Another factor for the stability of the country was that it had been united and created on the basis that this was an Islamic area. There is in Islam the idea of the brotherhood of the faith that is very, very strong. On top of that, there was this fear and distrust of India. So, those were some of the assets that were going to keep the country together. But I personally saw many problems and weaknesses. There was no program while I was there

for the government doing anything about the grinding poverty and lack of social equality in the country. It seemed to me very dangerous that the economy was so dominated by landlords, whereas most of the people were almost serfs working for them. There were no provisions for civil rights of minorities. I studied the provisional constitution while I was there. That was one of my interests. There was not even protection for continuance of parliamentary government. Pakistan merely took over the British Government of India Acts, made minor amendments to change the words from “India” to “Pakistan” and said “This is our constitution, temporarily.” So, with these handicaps and especially that split between the east and west sections of the country, the prevalent mood was one of insecurity. This led to high defense expenditures and little money for anything else.

I remember that we had an American naval visit while I was there. It was a cruiser and a pretty impressive ship. I was part of the embassy party that hosted the dignitaries that went aboard. I asked one of the government civil servants who came on board, a middle level person, how did he like the ship? He said, “Oh, it's very good, but we must have one.” Here was a country with millions of homeless refugees, but the primary reaction of the civil servant was, in effect, “We should have one because we've got this problem with India.”

Karachi itself was inundated with refugees, as were other cities such as Lahore. They were in terrible shape. There was no government program to help them particularly. They were living in shanties. There were new trade barriers that had grown up between these two countries that had been one economic unit, so that led to all sorts of problems.

I got to know West Pakistan pretty well. I never got to East Pakistan on that tour of duty. I did later. But I took trips to Peshawar by way of Lahore and Rawalpindi, to Quetta in Baluchistan, and then up to Gilgit in northern Kashmir, thanks to our air attach#, who was flying there for some other reason. My wife and I were able to go along.

By the way, we had our daughter, our only child, while we were in Karachi. I think Elaine was the first American born in Pakistan. We had some very good friends we left her with when we took this trip to Gilgit.

I might mention some of my colleagues there. When I arrived, there was a charg#, Charles W. Lewis, Jr. He was a very courtly gentleman who was part American Indian. I think he was considerate of us junior officers. He explained that we would each get some experience at this post in the administrative, consular, economic, and political work; we would rotate around. After him, there was Hooker Doolittle.

Q: Hooker Doolittle was very important in Tunisia. He had befriended Habib Bourguiba when he was kind of in exile. There is even a street named after him in Tunis. How was Doolittle?

JOSIF: He was a rough and ready type, but fair. We all appreciated his depth of experience in various parts of the world. I think his wife was Russian. He was in Indonesia during the critical period right after the war.

Then Ambassador Paul Alling came out shortly before I left. Hbecame ill almost immediately and was out of action most of the time.

I did my chores first in administration and then consular work. Some of that I found interesting. We had to enforce the law about polygamy, but the foreign minister of Pakistan was a polygamist, quite legitimately according to his religion. He was going to the UN, so we somehow got permission. In another case, a Ahmadiyya missionary was going to the States. That is a very conservative sect. His wife was veiled. I was the visa officer. I had her come in for identification, but I didn't ask her to remove her veil. Consular work I always felt had one big advantage. You had contact with local people and could sense things that people who were doing economic and political reporting might not see.

My heart was really in the economic and political reporting. I somehow managed to do that more than the other activities. I've mentioned the work on the new constitution. I reported on some commercial opportunities. I remember reporting on the minerals that I heard were in places like Baluchistan and the Gilgit area, and labor reporting. On the political side, I covered the Muslim League, which was the governing party, and the tiny socialist party. One of my big studies was about the Islamic organizations. I never got around to submitting the basic report on the Islamic organizations in Pakistan that I was planning on. I was rather suddenly transferred and couldn't get it done in time. I saved all the documents and gave them to somebody who was reasonably interested in the subject. It's worth mentioning, too, that in my first post I was very aware that, here I was, a white, rich, privileged person in a country where people were dark skinned, very poor, and very far from privileged. This was true inmost of my other posts, too.

Another of the problems we had in Pakistan is that they had so little experience in anything that we would call self-government, in responsible political dialogue. Conspiracy theories were rife about Palestine. Of course, as a Muslim country, they were very upset about the emergence of Israel. Kashmir, too, was a topic of much gossip. We were the all-powerful country. There were various theories that the United States had offered to help on Kashmir if Pakistan would give them bases and so on. It wasn't true, at the time at least. But that is the sort of thing we were dealing with. I would say it was a very fluid, unformulated political mix. One of the advantages that we had was that senior officers in the foreign ministry would socialize with us. They would come to our house for dinners and we would go to theirs. We probably had much better access than later generations at the post because of the fact that they were just getting set up.

Q: Did you feel that there was a supplanting of the British by the Americans there? Were Americans looked to more than the British at that time? Was that your impression?

JOSIF: No, but I think it was beginning to happen. For instance, on some subjects, our contacts seemed to be as good as the British. Probably they had some assets there that I

was not fully aware of. I knew one who had a ham radio. I think he was probably reporting secretly. But Britain had nearly been defeated during the War. The United States was obviously the coming superpower. I think that was beginning to make a difference.

Q: Was Mohammad Jinnah alive then?

JOSIF: Yes. He died while we were there. In fact, he was buried on the day that our daughter was born. It was also the day that the Indians invaded, took over, the great state of Hyderabad, which was one of the big undecided questions in central India. I refer to September 13, 1948. We had no contact with him. He was a very ill man. But we had very good contact with the foreign minister and other senior people at the foreign office and different ministries.

Q: What were American interests as you all were seeing them as junior officer in a new embassy?

JOSIF: I think that we realized there was a range of interests. We had some commercial interests. There was the jute from East Pakistan, for instance. There was a growing market for our products. But personally, I felt that our interests were mostly political, namely the stability and development of this important area of South Asia that the British had just relinquished and that we might have some influence on. We had just gone through a world war, terrible sacrifices and losses on all sides. The primary goal in foreign relations should be to prevent war, I thought. Here were two countries that were almost at each other's throats. They had massacred people of the minority in each country. There were millions of refugees on each side. Hindus and Sikhs had all been driven out of West Pakistan. There were millions of Muslims who had fled from northern India into Pakistan. There was a lot of tinder lying around. We thought it was in American interests to prevent a new conflagration. Kashmir, of course, was there to ignite it at any time. We were quite active in the Kashmir issue at that time. I had a minor part in it when I took an orientation trip to Rawalpindi in 1948. It was known as the jumping off point for “Azad Kashmir [Free

Kashmir]" guerrilla fighters in Pakistan- held parts of Kashmir. So I asked my taxi driver if they had a local office.

He drove me to an ordinary-looking British style bungalow. It was busy with men in regular army uniform. I walked in and up to the roof, where there was all sorts of standard communications equipment, aerials and what not. I started to walk out before I was stopped. So, they asked who I was. I gave them my calling card. Eventually it was turned over to the charg# and he had to explain what I was doing. But I got away with it. It proved to my satisfaction that the volunteers that Pakistan was saying were just tribesmen who couldn't be controlled in Kashmir were being aided logistically with official equipment, uniformed personnel, and so on. But that is just a footnote.

Q: As of 1999, there is still that going on. It became very clear that there is a little war going on there early this year on just that issue.

The Cold War was just beginning to crank up - Czechoslovakia and all,Berlin airlift. Did that intrude at all in our thinking?

JOSIF: Well, I think that we felt that if Kashmir, for instance, was not settled peacefully that it would give an opening for the Soviet Union to intervene and make hay with one side or the other, maybe both. The Cold War was just beginning to heat up. I don't think that it became while I was in Karachi the major preoccupation that it became later in Pakistan. In fact, I'm sure because I later was the officer in charge of Pakistan/Afghanistan Affairs in the 1960s.

Q: One more question. Was there any regularized way of keeping in touch with our colleagues in New Delhi about what was going on there? You were all part of one big problem.

JOSIF: Particularly at this time. New Delhi was always down for info on our telegrams and always got a copy of our mail. But this was a problem. A certain amount of localitis

crept in almost immediately, the Delhi people taking an Indian viewpoint and we taking a Pakistani viewpoint, relatively speaking. Who is perfect in something like this? You get different information and you're bombarded by daily pressures from the country that you're in. Yes, there was some tension, just as there was immediately between the governments of India and Pakistan and between the military on each side. Here was an army that had just been one, under a unified command, and suddenly it became two armies. Almost immediately, they were issuing challenges to each other and criticizing and complaining. The atmosphere was tense. You could never forget it. A city like Lahore, the most important city in Pakistan when I was there, was only 15 miles from the border. It was really in a very insecure position. Then too, more than half the population of the country was over in East Pakistan, 1,000 miles away. I met this problem of divergent viewpoints about India and Pakistan again and again. In the 1950s, I was India desk officer and then in the 1960s, the officer in charge of Pakistan/Afghanistan Affairs. Unfortunately, my tours in the Department were when the country that I was representing, so to speak, was out of favor in U.S. government policy.

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Q: Today is October 18, 1999. You wanted to put something in first about books you read when you were a young person.

JOSIF: I was very interested in the exploits of Admiral Byrd in exploring the Antarctic. So, I read everything that was printed in The New York Times about that when I was about 13 years old and submitted a long report to one of my classes in school on Admiral Byrd's exploits. Other things I read fell into the same general category of adventure or romance. For instance, I read “Lawrence of Arabia” by Lowell Thomas and that led me to “The Seven Pillars of Wisdom” by T.E. Lawrence himself. Some of the fiction I read was romantic, too, like “The Moonstone” by Wilkie Collins. But I was not a great reader in my teens. Towards the end of high school, I began to be interested in history and political theory. Of course, I was a real novice in both these areas. One book that influenced

me was “An Outline of History” by H.G. Wells. I think particularly of his idea that there is general progress in history. I bought it a little bit too much. But that's the way youth are, I guess. I also read something called “Living Triumphantly” by Kirby Page. Nobody seems to know who he was, but he was a prominent Christian thinker of the 1930s. As I recall, he was a reformer and advocated something we would perhaps call Fabian socialism. Then I read a book by Norman Thomas called “The Plight of the Sharecropper.” So, I began to get more and more into history, political theory, and economics. In other words, counterbalancing the romantic readings were these readings about theories and social problems. I certainly favored reform # la New Deal.

In college, I was drawn into social studies increasingly, partly because, although I majored in philosophy, it was required to take most of your work in some other field. I got into history, Spengler and Toynbee. I read Albert Schweitzer, too. He had the theory which struck me as rather potent at the time, that the West stood for world and life- affirmation, whereas in the East, the predominant outlook was one of world-and-life- negation. Then, of course, I took a whole series of courses that got into the history of political theory in the Western tradition: Locke, Rousseau, and all the rest. I began to become more sophisticated.

Q: Far more than most from the extent of your reading that you were into big systems philosophy and how things are put together rather than the individual histories of particular places.

JOSIF: Yes, that's true. I was interested in the big picture,synthesis and theory. That was the drift of my reading in my teens.

I would like to add something here to my earlier remarks to you. It relates to how the British were seeing us in Karachi. The commander of the Pakistan Army was British. After all, they had just ruled the country. I mentioned that there were a number of British officers of the ICS (Indian Civil Service) and the IPS (Indian Political Service) who were in key

positions. For instance, the governor of the Northwest Frontier Province was British. I met several district administrators and advisors to the princely states who were British. In some cases, we had contacts also with Englishmen who had just left their jobs, or who had been thrown out. There was obviously a movement for Pakistanization of all of the services. These were good jobs that were changing hands. My best contact about Kashmir was a former ICS officer who had just lost his position on this account. On the other hand, our mission in the embassy was to Pakistan. So, we cultivated Pakistanis socially much more than the Europeans, whether British or other. As a junior officer, I was just a third secretary and vice consul. So were Nick Thatcher and David Newsom. We were able to entertain cabinet ministers at our homes. It was only because they were just getting organized. They didn't care about the difference between a third secretary and a first secretary, perhaps. A letter to me once was addressed to “the third secretary to the vice consul.”

We junior officers gave lectures at the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, which, of course, was brand new and eager to get any talent in at all. I talked about the American educational system, a very broad survey. I also spoke before the Pakistan Foreign Service Academy, which was just getting organized, on education for the Foreign Service in the United States. I think I emphasized that most of my education for the Foreign Service had been before I got into it. Probably we were, in effect, through such activities, weaning the Pakistanis away from the British. I think the British must have felt that. We realized it, too, but felt that it was just incidental. Our object was to promote the United States and understanding of the United States.

British influence was very evident in Pakistan at that time anyway, in 1948-1949. The best educated Pakistanis, the ones we had the most contact with, were almost entirely educated in the U.K. They belonged to British-style clubs, which they conducted in much the same manner as Englishmen. For instance, there was a “Gymkhana” in every town. In 1949, I went to Quetta on a field trip. It was hot and dusty. This was the capital of Baluchistan Province. I had reservations at the Quetta Club, which turned out to be very

deserted and very British. I went down to dinner in a Haspel cord suit. That was practically a uniform for the American Foreign Service in South Asia.

Q: Bought at Walter H. Swartz in Baltimore, I think.

JOSIF: That's right. This was in blue. They only came in light blue and brown, I think. A British officer of the club came up to me and said, “You know, you're supposed to dress for dinner.” I said, “I'm sorry. I'm on tour and I didn't bring any formal clothes with me. This is all I've got in the way of a suit.” He shook his head and said, “Have it your way, Yank,” which perhaps was a typical reaction to our being so different.

I should also mention in connection with the British that we really benefitted from the Pakistani servants they had trained. For the first time, most of us became very dependent on servants when we got out there. They knew how to do the shopping, how to run the house. It was incredible how many it took to run a house. If you had a good bearer, he would supervise the whole show. Once, we changed bearers and got a new one who had been working for the British Army on the Northwest Frontier. At our next party, he rushed up to the guests as they arrived and got down on his knees and polished their shoes with a dustcloth. Apparently, this was what you did on the Frontier. I came to appreciate the cook's skills when our daughter was born. The doctor said it was just as safe or safer at home than in any of the local hospitals. Then the event happened in the middle of the night. He got rid of me right away by saying, “Go and make some boiled water.” So, I went down and here was a two place range, just two holes with a grill on top. You had to light a fire with some kindling, put charcoal on it, and keep fanning. The whole thing took me forever, to boil some water for the doctor. But it made me appreciate the cook's skills. Finally, I think I should mention the ayah. These nurses were marvelous. They really devoted themselves 100% to the children who were in their care. I felt very sorry that we couldn't do more for ours when we left. Of course, we gave her good references.

Q: In 1949, you went off to where?

JOSIF: To Oporto, Portugal on a direct transfer. I had been in Karachi only 20 months, but the policy then was to give most junior FSOs experience at two posts before they came back for home leave. So, we took a ship. You didn't have to fly in those days. The ship wandered around. First it went to Bombay and then it went through the Canal and up to Liverpool. Then we went to London and had a few days there. We took another ship that went from Southampton to Lisbon. Finally, we got to Oporto. We had passed it twice, actually, on the way.

The consul there was a man named Jay Walker. The ambassador in Lisbon was Lincoln MacVeagh. While I was there, Jay Walker was transferred. I was in charge briefly and then the embassy sent up a visa specialist named Leland Altaffer to be in charge. I was a little miffed that they thought somebody should come up and take over, but he was wonderful about it. He said, “Look, I know you're interested in political reporting. I am a visa specialist. So, why don't I do the visas and you do the political reporting?” I agreed to that immediately.

Q: You were there from 1949 until when?

JOSIF: 1949-1950, only about 10 months, maybe less. It was December 1949 when I arrived and we left in August 1950. This was a visa mill, the reason being that so many Portuguese had emigrated to the United States. Then they had their relatives they wanted to bring over. There were a few other consular duties. Nearly all local Americans were of Portuguese ancestry, many of whom had made some money in the States and come back to Portugal to retire and make their pensions last longer. The cost of living was very low there. It was one of the poorest countries in Europe, certainly in Western Europe.

Portugal had been under the dictatorship of Mr. Salazar for over 20 years. The opposition was thoroughly repressed, but it was in an authoritarian rather than a very vicious way. There was some opposition expressed. We began to get some pamphlets and even interview some opposition people. There didn't seem to be any government pressure on us

to stop. I think they must have known we were having some contacts with the opposition. The public was very pro-U.S. It was a pleasant post. We thrived, but I won't dwell on it unless you have some questions.

Q: I was just wondering, did you get any feel for Ambassador MacVeagh? Did we have a position on Portugal? Did the fact that it was authoritarian rather than dictatorial seem to bother us or not? Were we concerned at that time?

JOSIF: My impression was, we were not terribly concerned. Lincoln MacVeagh, who was a courtly old gentleman, probably felt that this would be a better country if it were democratic, but we didn't consider it our job to put much pressure on, I believe. We had some material interests. We had air rights in the Azores. Undoubtedly, there were all sorts of contacts that we had and issues we addressed that I was not concerned with at Oporto. The consulate was not fully clued in, as I recall.

I think that it was a period - 1949-1950 - when we were morinterested in the new NATO alliance and parts of Northern Europe.

Q: You mentioned NATO. Was Portugal a charter member of NATO?

JOSIF: Yes, but I do not recall that NATO membership per se was much of an issue at Oporto. Portugal had the longest history of independence of any of the countries of Europe, going back to the 1300s, but its alliance with Britain also went back that far. One of the most interesting aspects of our tour was that we were in the heart of the port wine export trade, and that it was run by naturalized Englishmen. You could tell from their names that their family descent was English. They and their families had been in the country for up to a couple hundred years.

Q: The immigrants were mainly going to Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

JOSIF: Yes. Bedford was one of the big centers. Providence.

Q: In 1950, whither?

JOSIF: In 1950, I was selected for South Asia language and area studies, which were then conducted at the University of Pennsylvania. I was brought back in August of 1950 and spent the school year plus the following summer (in other words, about a year calendarwise altogether) at the University of Pennsylvania taking their courses. They weren't designed specifically for the Foreign Service, but they were generally pretty good for us. Part of it was language training. They taught basic Hindustani that could be used in most of India and even in West Pakistan. The area studies were important. Economics of South Asia, social conflicts, art, history of art. One survey course was called “The History of Indian Civilization.” It was given by W. Norman Brown, who was the chairman of the department, certainly our best-known scholar at that time of the history of the subcontinent. I undertook to write a thesis. It wasn't really required that I go to that much effort, but I wrote an 80 page single spaced paper. It was entitled “Political Stability on the Northwest Frontier of South Asia.” The area covered was basically West Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Again, we enjoyed this interlude. It was good to get reamericanized. But we were then assigned to Madras. That was unfortunate in one respect. I was not able to use my Hindustani in Madras. I certainly lost my facility in it. I'm not sure how much better it would have been if I had gone to a Hindustani-speaking post right away.

Q: You went to Madras and you were there from 1951 to when?

JOSIF: To April 1953.

Q: What was Madras like at that time as a post? What was its role in India?

JOSIF: Madras was one of the four most important cities in India. It was the recognized center for affairs concerning the southern quarter of India. The population of the consular district in those days (we had only four) was roughly 80 million people. There was a

consulate general in Bombay and one in Calcutta and then New Delhi, of course, took up the fourth. South India is an area of minority groups who speak the Dravidian languages. There were four regional languages: Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam, and Kanarese. I had four local employee assistants, one for each of these languages.

One of my first jobs as the head of the Political Section (Actually, I was the only American political officer.) was to report on the upcoming general election, which was the first one in independent India, in 1951-1952. These elections were to the Indian Parliament. Indian elections are spread over a period of a couple of months. I had just arrived, but concentrated on this reporting. Then I started to study why the communists had succeeded in several areas. There were three areas where the communists got a majority of the vote.

The three areas were first Travancore-Cochin (later converted into Kerala State), where they spoke Malayalam. There was one district in Madras State, where they spoke Tamil. And then there were a couple districts in Andhra Pradesh, which were Telugu-speaking. So, my task, I thought, was to find out what was common in these three areas and what made people there vote differently than in other parts of India, where they voted in general for Congress Party and regional “communal” candidates.

In South Asia, the really basic political unit is the community. By that I mean people who belong to the same caste or who are otherwise identified by some common ethnic characteristic. Generally, this is stronger than any other force - nationalism or ideology or religion per se.

At first, it was striking that these three areas spoke three different languages. There was a lot of difference in the climate, too. But then I began to get into some “pay dirt.” Statistics showed that each of these areas was unusually productive agriculturally. Communism had reared its head in South India not because of the poverty of these rural districts, but precisely in the areas where they had the best rice production, the most income per capita - and the most education! I was able to gather about 12 characteristics like

that that these districts had in common. Some prevalence of Christianity was another factor that was common. That went along with education by and large. I submitted a long report with statistical tables and maps showing these areas in red. The overall conclusion was that they voted communist not because of dire poverty. They were all poor by American standards, but actually better off than other areas around them. It was because of the disparity in the incomes between the landowners and the landless peasants, usually sharecroppers. That combined with literacy. Some missionary activity had had an inadvertent role in the communist success, because it had educated people. They were somewhat aware of how the outside world lived and therefore more dissatisfied with the disparity in income in their locale. So, that made an interesting report. I was commended for it by, among others, Paul Nitze of Policy Planning.

Actually, I liked this post. Chester Bowles was ambassador. Robert Taylor was consul general. I felt very confident in my role. My output was very high.

Overall, my reports from Madras were singled out for 15 commendations for excellence and seven commendations of very good by the Department. The South Asian Office at the Department then had a program for commenting on field reports. They also commented, “Largely because of Mr. Josif's efforts, the Department probably has a more coherent and up to date intelligence of the political situation in Madras and South India than in any other consular district in India.” Ambassador Bowles wrote in February of 1953, “Mr. Josif has shown a marked ability to go beyond the more conventional kind of reporting and provide analyses of basic social, economic, and political conditions underlying political events and trends. It is apparent from his reports that he has well cultivated personal sources of information and has made extensive and intelligent use of documentary materials.”

Q: When I was in the Foreign Service during most of the Cold War, although I never served in India, I think all of us knew about this enclave of communism in South Kerala. This sort of stuck out like a sore thumb. So, there was a lot of interest in this during the whole period.

Did you get into what kind of communists were these?

JOSIF: Most of them were nominal communists. Kerala was a very interesting case because it had by far the highest literacy rate of any state in India. Perhaps due to the caste structure there, there were equalitarian tendencies, too. It's the only area in India that I'm aware of where they had a matriarchal social system - not all of them, but in some of the communities there. I think that it was because they were more aware of social inequalities and the promise of communism for equalization that made them cotton onto that ideology. Again, you have to say that this correlated with Christianity. Christianity came to that part of India in the first few centuries of the Christian era. It's interesting that the other major center of communism in India is West Bengal, where they've had a communist government for many years. There is a similarity between the educated Bengalis and the educated Malayam people of Kerala.

I had an amusing experience going to Kerala once. I was traveling with our labor attach# from Embassy New Delhi. His name was Henri Sokolove. We called on a prominent newspaperman in Kerala, an editor. I had just introduced Mr. Sokolove when the editor interrupted and said, “Oh, it's so good to see you here. We are great admirers of the Soviet Union. It was very nice of you to come and see us.” Then I introduced myself, saying, “I'm from the American consulate general in Madras.” He said, “And you, too. We're so happy to have Americans here with the Russians.”

Q: As a practical measure, did you see any translation of this communism in a local state translating itself into anti-Americanism or problems for us?

JOSIF: Not that I recall now in any detail. It was a local phenomenon due to local circumstances, basically, but we took measures to counteract anti-American propaganda in some areas. We had no reports of the Soviets or any other communists coming down and exhorting the people. This was just something that came from their reading, their outlook, and their social and economic situation. However, much of the material in local

bookstores was communist, very cheap, and probably subsidized. We took steps through USIS to counteract such material.

Q: This was during the McCarthy period. Were you feeling any heat as a junior officer there?

JOSIF: Yes. I was going to mention this at the end, but maybe I should do it now. I don't want to go into this in great detail, partly because I've lost touch with the details. Briefly, when I was still in Karachi, I received a questionnaire and request to answer by affidavit about two things. One was, did I know certain named people (There were eight of them.) at the Library of Congress in 1942? Secondly, was I a member of the Communist Party at any time?

I answered to the first question by explaining that three names there were of people who were leaders in this trade union local that I belonged to when I was at the Library of Congress. Regarding the other five, I had no recollection of them. On the other question, I said, “No, I never was then or ever have been a member of that party.” That was the last I heard of that. Then in 1953, thEisenhower administration came in and a new standard of proof was instituted - it was incumbent upon the employee to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that his continued employment was in the national interest. In other words, they shifted the burden of proof from the normal place, on the prosecution, to the accused. So, this reopened my case apparently. I was called back from Madras to Washington in April of 1953 and went through a very harrowing experience for over a year. One month, I was given make-work in the public affairs area under a gentleman named John French, who was extremely understanding. There were several of us junior officers under him, all in a problematical status. But I had a lot of time to work on my case. I was separated from my family for over four months.

Q: Your family was still in-

JOSIF: Yes. They left my family in Madras.

Friends said I should get a lawyer, and I read a book by John Lord O'Brian about civil rights law. He was a Washington lawyer, very prominent, elderly, perhaps the dean of Washington lawyers. I called on him and asked him his advice and he said, “I'll get a lawyer to work with you for a minimum charge.” This designated lawyer, from a law firm on Jefferson Street, urged me to write an autobiography to show what kind of person I was (and that, therefore, it was unlikely I would have ever belonged to this party, which was the real issue). The question about my associates at the Library of Congress, whatever they were, presumably arose because they were considered to belong to that party, too. He felt that the implied guilt by association here would not be decisive.

Q: When you say “that party,” you're talking about...

JOSIF: The Communist Party. So, my lawyer said, “Write your autobiography.” I wrote a very thorough one, perhaps 50 or 60 pages. On reading it, he complained that he was getting only “charwoman's pay,” actually 50 dollars.

One day at the Department, I was summoned to see a man named Scott McLeod, who had been a big wheel in the congressional investigations of communists in government. I think he was chief of security. He tried to pressure me to resign, which I refused to do. I said, “I'm innocent.” So the lines were drawn that summer. I spent a lot of time going back and looking up people that I had known at the Library of Congress, many of whom were still there, interviewing them, asking them to write an affidavit on my behalf. Most of them were just character references. What could they say? The Department finally recalled my family in September. We were separated for four months and then reunited.

Then beginning in December, I was suspended without pay for five months. I had a lot of time to think, of course. It was really an impossible situation. How do you prove that you have never been a member of a group? My replies to the charges, with the autobiography

and 64 exhibits, had failed to outweigh the word of my accuser, an informant said to be of “known reliability.” Only I knew different. One of the things I tried to think of was who would be the informant, who would have made such a charge? It was obviously somebody who didn't know me, at least not well. What was the basis of his or her information? It had something to do with this union I had belonged to in 1942. I admit, I had been active in it, but so what? It was a local labor union. I didn't know who controlled the union and I still don't know if any party really controlled it. One of the things I learned, however, was that in 1943-1945, there was another man surnamed like me, at the Library, who was reputed to belong to that party.Eventually, I was called in by the Under Secretary of State, the deputy to John Foster Dulles. His name was Walter Bedell Smith. He upbraided me for having belonged to a union of government employees, and said I or someone else was lying. He then offered me a lawyer of his acquaintance “to see that you have a proper defense, assuming he agrees to take you.” It turned out the lawyer was Stuart Hedden, recently retired inspector general of the CIA. In my first interview with him, he lit into me for belonging to a union of government employees. I said, “Well, you have to remember that the Library of Congress was and still is a very large, practically industrial organization. Thousands of people work there. Working conditions were not good. The pay was very low, the turnover high. I viewed it like a factory with labor problems. That is why I joined the union.” He accepted that. He went through my documents, by then inches thick, and represented me at my hearing. No question of my paying him ever arose. It was all pro bono work. He also offered to pay personally for travel to the hearing by any witness against me. The authorities chose not to accept that offer - or his request to interview the investigative agents involved - or my offer to take a lie detector test.

They had called a number of witnesses to my hearing, held in April 1954. One of them was the chief of the Legislative Reference Service at the Library of Congress, Dr. Ernest Griffith, a former professor of political science, a Methodist and a strong church man. He described me as having been a very liberal young man, but definitely anti-communist. Another was the deputy librarian of the Library of Congress, an old administrative hand

who had been there for 35 years, I think. I had interviewed him some months before and told him I had finally guessed the identity of my accuser and would like to interview her. He strongly advised against doing so, implying a danger in it. He chewed me out later for having done what he had advised against. I said, “Well, I was desperate, Sir.” For background, I had heard several times that the likely informant was a woman who had worked at the Library of Congress in 1942. I hadn't known her at all. The name was completely unfamiliar to me. But she was now retired and living with her mother in one of those townhouses in Georgetown. I decided that if I interviewed her, I might discover the basis of her suspicions of me. Incidentally, if she didn't recognize me, that showed something: she had informed on somebody she didn't know by sight. So, I went and started asking questions as if I were an investigative agent. I talked to her for 10 minutes before she finally said, “Could you show me your identification?” I must have been an untypical agent. So I said who I was. She seemed very embarrassed. In effect, she admitted she had made a mistake, but blamed others, too. I wrote an affidavit on the interview, all four hours of it. I learned later that the board asked to interview her, and did so, eventually.

So, there was this hearing. Finally, I was cleared by the members of the board, unanimously. I am sure that I had the best representation. But I never learned the details of their reasoning.

Q: But it is very indicative of the time.

JOSIF: Oh, yes.

Q: Scott McLeod was the chief of the Bureau of Security and counselor-

JOSIF: He was sent over by Congress as an enforcer of the new Loyalty/Security program.

Q: In a way, you were somewhat helped by being a missionary kid,weren't you, being part of the missionary establishment?

JOSIF: Yes, I was. As it happened, my father had been a student at Union Theological Seminary when the president was a Presbyterian who was very well-known to Dulles, himself a Presbyterian church leader. I had written to Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen hoping to get a character reference about my family. He decided to put in a word to Dulles. I don't think that would have helped, however, if I had not made a case in writing. Also, I credit the hearing board and the others who applied some common sense to the rules and to the claims of anonymous informants and their nameless handlers.

Q: This was a very dark period and I think this is very illustrative of what happened. What does one do if you're suspended without pay and you've got a wife and kids? What do you do?

JOSIF: Well, we ran down our bank balance. It was down to $50 whel was reinstated with back pay.

Q: Did you get back pay?

JOSIF: Yes. I must say that the sequel was really very satisfactory. I was immediately made the India desk officer. I was promoted the next month to class 4. I've never been very curious about my Personnel file, but did have a glance at it a couple of times. I noticed that it made minimal reference to this whole episode and commented something like this: “Apparently, he was mistaken for another person. It was a case of mistaken identity.” Somebody who had read it had sort of underlined that in pen.

Q: What was the reaction of your fellow officers and all while this was going on?

JOSIF: There was one who declined my suggestion that he write me a character certificate, somebody I thought knew me better than that. But in most cases, they came

through for me very well, and fully accepted me after I was cleared. If anyone, it was I who changed the most. I became more circumspect, I believe, and thus less confident or articulate. For instance, I wrote a long analysis of “Federal Employee Security Procedures” for The Foreign Service Journal (September 1954 issue). It was critical, but in such “constructive” and academic terms as to bore almost anybody.

Q: When did you start on the India desk?

JOSIF: Right away. I think it was June 1954.

Q: And you did that from 1954 until when?

JOSIF: 1957, three years. I was India desk officer for three years.

Q: How did your wife do under this thing? This must have been terrible.

JOSIF: It was a great strain. At first, our friends at Madras thought I had been called back for some honorable recognition, but as my absence went on, people stopped asking her about it. She got very anxious to rejoin me or have me come back to Madras. I wasn't able to explain very well why there were so many delays and uncertainties. It was a complex situation. I was separated from my daughter, too. I felt guilty about both. It's something I don't look back on with any pleasure, to put it mildly.

I was pleased that I was accepted back by my friends in South Asian Affairs (SOA). I'll mention them. Jeff Jones (J. Jefferson Jones, III) was the office director. I worked under Bill Williams, who was officer in charge for India/Nepal/Ceylon. I was the India desk officer. I had somebody to help me, another officer. I had served in Pakistan and India and was one of the relatively few officers in the Foreign Service then who had done both. I felt that I had a role to play in supporting a balanced policy. This was a period when India was not popular in the United States or in Washington, understandably so. I mean, Krishna Menon was-

Q: He was the b#te noire of...

JOSIF: You see, he had this combination of British snobbery and British socialism. He was a product of the London School of Economics. He represented a part of Nehru. Nehru was a much more likeable person. But he too stood for non-alignment, neutralism, equidistancing between the East and the West. All of this was detestable to some people and was at least suspicious to other people. John Foster Dulles called it immoral.

Nehru was a moralizer and he would moralize against us. We were moralizers, too. So we rubbed each other's fur the wrong way. He criticized us about neo-colonialism as seen in our security alliances. They were really bothering him. We were boxing him in with SEATO on one side and CENTO on the other. We were establishing bases in these places. Of course, he was especially irritated with any military aid to Pakistan.

We in SOA felt that we should give India economic aid and that there shouldn't be so much hassle about it. One of the problems was that Nehru was reluctant to ask for it. He thought that was beneath him, his dignity. Even when we gave aid, it was not much appreciated. My theory was that economic aid, if it was to be effective, had to be addressed to actual needs and therefore should be more or less proportional between India and Pakistan according to population. India had about four times the population of Pakistan.

One of my duties was to brief new ambassadors going out to India.There was John Sherman Cooper.

Q: He was a senator from Kentucky.

JOSIF: Yes. He only stayed there about a year and then he came back to run for the Senate again, I think. Then Ellsworth Bunker. He was a very impressive person. He had been head of a sugar manufacturing company and then an association of sugar industries. But he had a broad approach to things. I was in a meeting once when an American railroad man was talking about improving railroads in India and how they should

have private railroads there the way we have in the States. Bunker put him down very effectively. Here was a person with his background in private enterprise who said, “Look, we're about the only country in the world that tries to run its railroad system with private companies. We've got better things to do in India than try to change the ownership of the railroads.”

I was not entirely happy with the Department in the 1950s. I certainly felt up to the job and so on. But I had, thanks to Wristonization, been set back from FSO class 4 to 5, which was demoralizing.

Q: That was a change in the calculation. At one time, they had six grades and then they moved to eight grades.

JOSIF: So they had to set back people in some of the middle grades to keep the shape of the pyramid. As a result of that, I applied to a Washington think tank about possibly shifting jobs. They seemed to take me seriously. But when push came to shove and they took me out to lunch, I said, “Well, I've thought about it some more and decided that I'd better stick with what I've got.” I had built up some assets in the Foreign Service. That was my decision. But it showed that I was looking around.

Q: I think 1954-1957 was a very interesting time. I've seen criticisms today... Right now, there is another coup in Pakistan and people are looking at our attitude towards Pakistan vis a vis the Indians and all and wondering why we seem to have come down so heavily over the years on supporting Pakistan as opposed to the democracy of India. I think you were there in one of the critical times which helped set the standards. The Indians were really not considered to be very friendly. As John Foster Dulles said, they were basically immoral by playing up to the communists.

JOSIF: Right. I wrote many briefing papers trying to explain the Indian position and why we were having so much trouble with them and how it was partly just a difference in perspective. Here were two moralistic peoples, both democracies. They should be

reasonably friendly, but we were talking past each other to a large extent. We ourselves had put a cat in the henhouse by giving so much aid to Pakistan. It was not known at the time, but one reason for that was we were basing a U2 plane there. That came out later when the plane was shot down in the Soviet Union. Things like that enter into decision-making, and even the desk officer might not know about it. My idea was that we have a balanced policy and try to get along with both sides. Of course, that is what most of us have tried to do for 50 years, not with any great success.

Q: Were you seeing any of the battle of the capitals, the battle of the embassies, particularly when you get somebody high-powered like Kenneth Galbraith or Bowles or something who seem to have gone overboard on love for India? Did you see the difference between our Pakistan embassy and India? Were you watching these salvos go back and forth or was it a fairly benign period when you were there?

JOSIF: I know what you're talking about. I was later, in the early 1960s officer in charge of Pakistan Affairs during the pro-Indian period. So, if you don't mind, I'll comment on this whole problem when I come to that stage.

In 1957, I asked the Iran desk officer if possibly there was some consulate in Iran where I could serve and get some experience as officer in charge. I felt that I needed that type of experience. He got me the most important consulate in Iran, I would say: Tabriz. I was asked to arrive in May. This meant taking our daughter out of school a little early. As it happens, when we left the post two years later, we were asked to stay on through an inspection. So, we didn't get out until August. It was a direct transfer to another post, but meanwhile, we had home leave in Washington. So, we put our daughter back in the school where she had been. We felt this was a great idea. She came back in tears the first day. Nobody recognized her. You know how kids are. Two years is an eternity. They had already made new friends and they didn't recognize her. She was really devastated. On top of that, she became deeply worried about how she was missing school at our new post.

Q: I always found in our moves, the hardest ones have been whewe've come back to Washington. The kids don't really adjust very well.

JOSIF: I don't know if a study has been made of this, but there is some feeling in the Foreign Service that our kids don't turn out as well as kids generally. I don't know if there are any statistics that would support that. But there have been many cases of kids who have had a lot of problems adjusting.

Q: Let's talk about Tabriz. You were in Tabriz from 1957 to 1959. Talk about Tabriz.

JOSIF: I was the consul and principal officer there under Ambassador Selden Chapin first and then Tom Wailes. Like the other consuls (There were consuls in Meshed, Khorramshahr, and Isfahan, too.), we worked under the chief of the Political Section in Teheran, John Bowling, who was very good.

Tabriz was a listening post during this period. It was an important post. Azerbaijan was the most populous region of Iran because of its agricultural production. It had the largest minority problems. The whole population was a minority - mostly Turkish or Kurdish. Then there was the nearness to the Soviet Union. That was a feature shared with Meshed. It was only about 50 miles from the Soviet border, which made it of special interest in some respects. Then there was this history of opposition and separatism. Tabriz has a record in this century of being the leader, or one of the first leaders, of opposition to whatever government is in Teheran. So, it was a place to keep in touch with. There was also the role of protecting local Americans. There were some missionaries in the compound right next to ours. There were some travelers. It's surprising how many people try to go overland from Europe to India, let's say. Some of them are Americans. I did a lot of traveling there. I felt it important to tour my consular district, including the Kurdish areas, some of the Kurdish leaders, for instance. In Tabriz itself, which was a Turkish or Azeri area, it was important to know local leaders including the governor general, the chief of the military, and the religious leaders, Muslim and some Christians.

We had some interesting visits while I was there. One was from Justice William O. Douglas. On one of his many travels, he came through overland by car from Iraq. I went down to the border and met him at the pass. I stayed with him the whole time. He had his own contacts already with some of the Kurdish chiefs. He was a man with a common touch. He would have made an excellent politician. His wife at that time was a lady named Mercedes. She was his auto mechanic among other things. As soon as they stopped at our house, where they were to stay, she got out and checked under the car. But later, he traded her in for another model.

Q: Much younger.

JOSIF: Yes. I went with him right up to the Turkish border when he went through. He was given the royal treatment there. The Turks turned out the border patrol for him to review. Mount Ararat glistened beyond.

Another visitor we had was Senator Ellender of Louisiana. He made a career in the Senate of traveling abroad. He took extensive notes. He was serious, but he had certain peculiarities. For instance, he wanted to know whether or not a post was self-supporting. He asked how much we collected in visa fees, which was practically nothing, of course, in a place like Tabriz. Another of his pet subjects was the wastefulness of USIS libraries. He asked if we had one and wanted to know all about what USIS was doing. He had just come from the Soviet Union and was very proud that he had been the first person from the Congress to travel through the Soviet Union and cross the border into Iran directly. I had to go up to the border to meet him. It was an unusual event. The Soviets made him carry his bags across the bridge across the river. I met him at the Iranian side and carried the bags back to our car.

Regarding his plans, he said, “It would be nice to fly down to Teheran.” I said, “Well, there is no scheduled flight.” He said, “How about the attach# plane coming up and getting me?” I said, “It's possible. I'll ask the Defense attach#. It depends on the weather.” The

attach# agreed to come up, but sure enough, that morning, the weather closed in and he wired, “No, I'm sorry. It's too dangerous. I can't make it.” The senator wanted to get to Teheran badly, so I said, “You can take a consulate car and I'll ask the embassy to meet you halfway down there with their car.” The embassy then balked and said in effect that they could not afford this arrangement. It was now about midnight. I sent back a very curt reply, saying, “Senator Ellender is departing Tabriz by consulate car at 4:30 a.m. I suggest you meet him half-way to Teheran,” which they did, of course. By the way, he stopped for refreshments at a local tea house and ate a melon, then came down with this terrible case of tummy trouble which laid him low the rest of his stay in Iran.

Tabriz was an interesting post. Before I left, I asked the Department's Historical Division to write a history of the post because of the fascinating stories I had heard about it. They agreed, but I don't know if they did it or not. Let me tell you just one of those stories.

The post was opened in 1906. The first consul was a man named William F. Doty. He was sent there because there were a lot of American missionaries and they were being threatened (In fact, one of them had been killed recently.). They were traveling around the country and it was insecure. While Doty was there, a constitutional crisis arose. Tabrizis, as usual, were leading the resistance to the Shah of the period. In the local mission's boys' school, there was a young American teacher fresh out of Princeton named Howard Baskerville. He was very interested in the local situation. When the Shah's army besieged Tabriz in 1909, Howard Baskerville decided that he should help these poor people. Tabrizis were beginning to starve under the siege. So, he took some of his students and started training them to be a military unit. He was required by the mission to resign because he was doing something out of line. The consul was even more agitated. He went down to the local square, the parade ground where troops were training, and from horseback told Baskerville, “I've warned you publicly that you are not to interfere in the internal affairs of the host country and you should cease and desist.” He cautioned him that it was dangerous, too. Baskerville refused to desist, as a matter of conscience. He went out on patrol shortly thereafter and was shot dead by a sniper. Howard Baskerville

became an instant hero to modern-minded Iranians because he was a foreigner who took the constitutionalists' side. These constitutionalists were opposed to the Shah, but the Shah of the day was of a different dynasty than the Pahlavis. At the suggestion of John Bowling at the embassy, I and my public affairs officer arranged a whole day of events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Howard Baskerville's death. The ambassador came up from Teheran, as did the chief of USIS. Local officials spoke. A hall in a public school was named for Baskerville. We made a big thing of it and got away with it.

The post was hard on my family. For instance, there was no school for my daughter. She was school-age. My wife had to teach her at home with the Calvert system, which was a common solution. There were only a few other American kids in town.

I mentioned this inspection. It was done by an administrative inspector. The team split up in Teheran. I happened to get the administrator. He found a number of minor administrative faults. I was upset. In a huff, I submitted a letter of resignation from the Foreign Service. The routine was, you sent it to the ambassador. The terminology then for formal correspondence was, “I have the honor to...” I was upset with this inspector because he had, for instance, quizzed me at length about a coin worth a fraction of a cent that he found missing in an account that I was responsible for. Of course, when I got down to Teheran on my way out, the ambassador persuaded me to withdraw the letter.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

JOSIF: Tom Wailes was the ambassador at that time.

Q: During this time, what about relations with the Kurds and theirelations with us?

JOSIF: This was a sensitive subject. The government in Teheran was very suspicious of any interest shown by a foreign power, particularly any major power, in any of the minorities. Of course, Iran is rimmed with minorities. There are not only the Kurds, but Azeris and a whole series of tribes. It was part of our job, I thought, and certainly the

embassy was interested in what was going on among the Kurds. The Russians had during the Second World War set up a puppet regime among the Kurds. The leader of that regime was still around, actually living just across the border in Iraq. He was basically a Kurdish nationalist. Later, he worked with us actually. He was just playing the field. One of the things I did was to visit his village and talk to some of his sons, one of whom is the leader of the Northern Kurds now in Iraq.

I always made a point of calling on the local governor, and the local military commander. In Kurdish areas, they could be edgy. I remember one commander saying to me, “You're beginning to play with fire.” I was just too interested in what was going on among the Kurds. It was a period when the Shah was very strongly motivated to work with us. We had helped save him in 1953 against Mossadegh. He was feeling his oats again, but he hadn't committed some of the excesses that brought his downfall later.

One of the problems we had, I thought, was that there were so many Americans running around. We had a big AID mission, USIS, a huge military aid mission, and whatnot. We were pressing for a status of forces agreement that would protect our military in case of local crimes or alleged crimes.

Three non-commissioned officers in the American military mission in Tabriz were riding in a Jeep in a bazaar area. Unwittingly, the driver, an American sergeant, went down a one way street the wrong way. This caused a commotion. When he got to an intersection, a policeman tried to remonstrate. The driver panicked and started to drive off. The policeman threw himself on the hood of the jeep, and the driver drove that Jeep with a policeman on it right up to the consulate. He was followed by a stream of hundreds of irate Tabrizis. I was having lunch with my family and went out to see what was going on. Here this Jeep came bouncing across the almond orchard between our house and the consulate. The crowd pressed close around me. Somebody interpreted for me. I finally got an agreement that I would report the incident and our own military would discipline the American. Would everyone please leave now? They started leaving, but one of

them hauled off and socked me on the jaw, not too hard, to show his resentment at our presence.

Q: What was your impression of the writ of the Shah? I don't know if the White Revolution had started by this time. But here is something on the fringe... I imagine you were watching this.

JOSIF: Yes. I think his revolution had started. He had not called it the White Revolution yet, but, for instance, he had expressed ideas about land reform - he would take land from large landowners and give it to the peasants. This was certainly a major problem. We had landlords in our district who owned several villages. He also had started spending more money on education and on health. He had started a literacy program, for instance. So, he had some good ideas from our point of view, but the lack of follow-through by his underlings was appalling. He visited Tabriz once while we were there. Everybody had to come out in tails. He was like an icon, unbending. He had no warmth. He had a presence, but no warmth. I think he was basically a weak man who was in it over his head.

Q: His father was a huge, rough, basically Cossack type who had presence.

JOSIF: That's right. His father had commanded a Cossack regiment. This man wasn't a military man, but he loved to play that he was a military man. A major reason for his downfall later was that he ordered so much military equipment from us. That meant that we had to send so many people there to show him how to use it and maintain it. There were over 40,000 Americans, many running around in places like Isfahan and Tabriz, which are very traditional still. Down in the bazaar, they never see women in halters and shorts. But when American technicians arrived by the thousands with their wives, I understand this happened. There was a reaction.

Q: How did you find the importance of the Bazaaris there, the merchant class?

JOSIF: Very important, partly because they had the wealth, and because they were religiously motivated. They were conservative, Muslim traditionalists and very nationalistic. It was important that things not go too contrary to their interests or their way of looking at things. The Shah eventually tried to suppress the religious element. That was a great mistake. The thing that started the Khomeini rise to power was that, in 1964, the Shah rammed through parliament a Status of Forces Agreement for us. That was when Khomeini started to go public and things went from bad to worse.

Q: During the 1957-1959 period, were there any repercussions on youside about the events of July 14, 1958 in Iraq?

JOSIF: Well, yes. The effect was on the Kurdish population. The Iranian Kurds were in close touch with the Iraqi Kurds. The border meant nothing to many of them. It was the same tribe on both sides and so on. I think the first reaction was to wait and see what this meant for the Kurds. They began to become more suspicious of Iraq when they saw that the leadership was so predominantly Arab nationalist. They felt that Kurdish interests were not being fully met.

Q: Were the Soviets doing much down there? Were we concerned about the Soviets fishing in these potentially troubled waters?

JOSIF: Yes. Azerbaijan was a contested area between Iran and Russia for a period of 100 years. The Russians got the northern half of it and the Iranians the southern half. During World War II, the Russians set up a puppet regime in Tabriz. One of my predecessors, Bob Rosso, was there in 1946 when the Soviets were answering our criticisms in the UN Security Council that they were interfering in Tabriz. While they were denying it, he was radioing, “I have just seen Soviet tanks running through the streets here.” My tenure there was relatively quiet, but of course we kept the potential for further expansion from the north well in mind.

Our second consul in Tabriz was a man named Gordon Paddock. He was there from about 1911 to 1920, a period of several Russian interventions. Once, a Russian circus came through town and went broke. He got to know the personnel to some extent. As a matter of fact, he wound up marrying the lady bareback rider.

Gordon Paddock features in another Tabriz story. He finally got home leave after the war and reported back to Washington, to the receptionist in the old State building. He said, “I am Gordon Paddock reporting back from Tabriz, Iran, where I was consul.” The receptionist said brightly, “But, Sir, we don't have a consulate in Tabriz.”

Q: Back in the 1920s, wasn't one of our consuls killed there? It'on the plaque that somebody was killed in Iran by a mob.

JOSIF: I don't believe it was Tabriz. Actually, the post was closed for economy reasons during the 1930s. It was reopened during the war in 1942.

Q: When you left Tabriz in 1959, where did you go?

JOSIF: I got a direct transfer to Colombo, Ceylon.

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Q: Today is October 25, 1999. Hal, in 1959, you were off to Colombo, Ceylon. It was still Ceylon.

JOSIF: It was still Ceylon. It is now Sri Lanka.

Q: You were there from 1959 to when?

JOSIF: To 1962. I was there for three years.

Q: What was your job?

JOSIF: I was the chief of the Political Section. I reported to Turner Cameron, who was the DCM. I served under two ambassadors: Bernard Gufler and Frances Anderson, both career people and both very fine ambassadors. I supervised Frank Lambert, who was the Labor officer, although he was the same grade that I was - Jim Lowenstein, too, who was a junior officer at that stage.

Ceylon and the embassy had become notorious in a way. I might tell a story about a previous ambassador, a political appointee whose name I've fortunately forgotten. He became notorious when he couldn't pronounce the prime minister's name in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. His misadventures continued in Ceylon.

Q: I might have to add to that that the name is Bandaranaike. Everybody in the Foreign Service had to learn how to pronounce the name. This was not the wife. This was the husband. He was assassinated, I think.

JOSIF: Right. Later, when I was there, his wife was prime minister.

Q: How did Gluck do when he was in the job?

JOSIF: I wasn't there, so I won't say, but I have a good story about when he left. He had a sale. He had been owner of a ladies dress business. So, he had a sale of a large number of ladies garments at the embassy residence before he left. There was a big turnout. That evening, the Egyptian ambassador called Jim Lowenstein, whom I just mentioned, and said, “Could you come over here? I have an item that I thought was rather attractive, but I don't know what it is. I bought it at your ambassador's sale.” Jim Lowenstein walked over to the Egyptian ambassador's residence, which was right next door, and lo and behold, it was the Great Seal of the United States.

Q: Oh, God!

JOSIF: Ceylon was our pleasantest posting. I liked the job situation. I thought I was qualified and people were congenial. It was a tropical paradise. An Anglican bishop had visited the country in the early 1800s and wrote a famous hymn in which he referred to Ceylon in these terms: “Where nature's every prospect pleases and only man is vile.”

Q: I think it is. “From Greenland's Icy Mountains, from India'Coral Strand.”

JOSIF: Yes. He was a little hard on the people. They were really very pleasant, certainly to us. The poverty there was less oppressive than it was in India or Pakistan. People were smiling and there was no language problem. Almost everybody spoke some English and many of them spoke it perfectly. There was an interesting political situation, too.

In the first place, I might mention the vestiges of British colonialism. The governor general was a Ceylonese whose name was Sir Oliver Goonatilake. Then, there was evidence of rising communal friction. By “communal,” I mean between Ceylon Tamils and the majority Sinhalese. This has since become a civil war. At that time, it was a latent problem. Mr. Bandaranaike had started the trouble really by declaring Sinhalese as the only official language.

Q: This was the mail bombing.

JOSIF: He was killed. That put the fat in the fire. It gave an excuse to any Sinhalese bureaucrat who wanted to discriminate against a Tamil. A Tamil ordinarily wouldn't speak Sinhalese. The fact was that in most government offices, at least at the higher levels that we dealt with, English was used.

There was also an interesting left-right division there. We had in the local parliament some people who were big landowners, very right. On the other hand, there were some very left people. There was a regular communist party and then there was a Trotskyite party. One of the curious things was that the leaders of these two parties and other parties met regularly, not only in parliament, but on the social scene in Colombo. It was quite common

to run across the leaders of all parties. I myself entertained the two I just mentioned, plus several from the two majority parties, the UNP and Mrs. Bandaranaike's party, the SLFP.

One of the things I did there was to hire a local person as a political assistant, partly because of his language abilities, but also because he had been a police officer and knew the local situation in Colombo very well. It's the same policy I had adopted when I was in Tabriz where I found that the one interpreter we had was a Christian, whereas my district was almost entirely Muslim. So, I hired a local Azerbaijani landlord. He had been in the Persian foreign service. Then when he left, I hired a Kurdish gentleman. So, we got a little more variety in our sources.

There were a couple attempted coups in Colombo while I was there. One in particular posed a problem for me. This assistant that I just mentioned who was a former police officer reported one night rather late, about 10:00 p.m., that there was an attempted coup afoot involving some police and army officers. So, I reported it to Turner Cameron, the DCM. He was having a huge party. It was probably the biggest party he gave while he was there. I think it had at least a couple hundred guests. I had to call him and get him on the phone. He said, “Come over.” So I went over and briefed him at the party. He didn't, frankly, seem to be very interested. So, when further developments occurred later that evening, I thought, “Well, look, I had better not call the DCM out of the party again. It's going to be kind of obvious. I'll just tell the ambassador,” which I did. The ambassador was Frances Willis, the lady ambassador career person who had worked up from mail clerk. She was glad to get the information. I think by then we knew the coup was going to fail. Anyway, I didn't report again back to Turner Cameron. He chewed me out for that the next day. But it was a case where my judgement was that it would look suspicious if his guests saw me again or even if he was called to the phone again. It would be around town the next day that the Americans were somehow involved in this attempted coup. Maybe I was being overly suspicious, but that was my feeling. I think I was right. Later, one of the

guests at the party was heard to say, “Well, that evening I was at the party, Mr. Josif came over and talked to Mr. Cameron” as if this showed some connection to the attempted coup.

While we were in Colombo, my family and I went on an extended visit to Burma. My mother came out from the States. We met her there and had about 10 days going around the country. This was in January of 1962. When we got back in our social circles, it became known that we had been to Burma. A communist paper the next week had an item that said, “It's no coincidence that Mr. Josif visited Burma. He came back last week just before the Burmese military staged a coup.” This was a reflection of the social situation I mentioned where people of all these parties, including the extreme leftist parties, were active socially and exchanged gossip and so on.

Q: Were we under any constraints regarding contact with communist or Marxist parties?

JOSIF: Not in Ceylon. Since everyone else was meeting with N.M. Perera, the Trotskyite leader, or Peter Kunaman, the communist leader, at cocktail parties, why should we stop? In fact, Frances Willis and other Western ambassadors chatted with them regularly. They were members of parliament.

Q: How did you find Frances Willis?

JOSIF: We admired her. She was 100% professional. She didn't make a big point of being a career woman. In fact, she told me once, “I know I was appointed to Ceylon because there was a woman prime minister here (Madame Bandaranaike), but I don't think it makes any difference. I don't think it improves my access or hinders it either.” I think she had three ambassadorships, all told, to Norway and Switzerland, as well as Ceylon.

Q: During this 1959-1962 period, what were our American interests as we perceived them at that time?

JOSIF: We had to submit planning policy papers to the Department in which we tried to show the importance of the country we were assigned to. Every embassy had to do it. In Ceylon, we had to think hard about this. It was a “medium-sized” country. It happened to be in a fairly strategic location if you were interested in sea transportation. It was a bit off the main route for air transportation, but we made the usual comments about the crossroads of the Indian Ocean. I personally didn't attach much weight to those things. It was a democracy. Naturally, we wanted to see it continue as a democracy and solve some of its problems, namely the communal problem which was beginning to loom, and the economic problems, too.

We had a large AID mission there. The embassy was active in the decision-making on what to support and what not to support. The AID director got up in front of us on starting to support a huge irrigation project, which the embassy thought was too expensive.

The Peace Corps came while we were there. They made a point otrying to distance themselves from the embassy, and succeeded.

The USIS was very large. Bob Lincoln was the PAO. I thought it was effective on the whole.

Q: Did India sort of loom as the colossus to the north or anything like that? India was going through trouble with China at the time. I was wondering whether there was any feeling that India was fishing in troubled waters.

JOSIF: At that time, I don't think so. I think that India - although it's terribly massive compared to Ceylon (The ratio of population was about 40 to 1.) - was preoccupied, as you pointed out, beginning in 1961 and then especially in 1962 with its northern border and the Chinese incursions across the border. There was one respect in which India was of concern to the Ceylonese and therefore of some interest to us, namely the Tamil problem. The Tamils in northern Ceylon were related, of course, to the Tamils across the narrow

Palk Strait in Madras, India. Also, there were Tamils working in the tea plantations up-country around Kandy. Between them, the two Tamil communities amounted to about 22% of the population. It was a considerable minority. There was a feeling among the Sinhalese that they shouldn't let India support the Tamils or get involved in local politics. I was surprised, frankly, when much later, the Ceylonese were persuaded that they needed Indian troops to put down a rebellion by the “Tamil Tigers,” and when the Indian Army got involved. It was a thankless task. They wound up killing Tamils, which made them very unpopular in Madras, where a suicide bomber killed Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Q: In 1962, whither?

JOSIF: It turned out to be the Air War College at Montgomery, Alabama. I was a student there. The State Department advisor was John Jernegan, whom I had known in the Department. He had been a deputy assistant secretary of State for NEA. Among my academic efforts was a paper on “the country team” that I thought was an important concept worth explaining - how we operate in embassies. Also, I was in a group that made a presentation on the Sino-Indian war that was going on then. I had some good colored slides from my visit to Gilgit to illustrate the rough country. My thesis there was on civil-military coordination in a country that requests limited military intervention. The example that I examined most closely was that of our intervention in Lebanon in 1958. There was a lack of coordination between the Navy and the embassy as to where to land troops. The ambassador expected them to come into port and just get off, but the Navy had already geared up to making a beach landing, so that is what happened. I tried to draw some lessons from that. The paper was highly regarded. It was selected to be printed in the Air War College magazine of September 1963.

Q: When one looks at it, the Air Force in a way probably has less concern about what is going on down on the ground. It's a very technical service. The Navy at least puts into ports. The Air Force, except where arrangements are made for bases, it's kind of above everything. I've heard some people say that the Air Force officers are just not as

internationally savvy, particularly in contrast to the Navy, but particularly to the Army officers, who often are on the ground. We're talking at the higher ranks. Did you find any of that?

JOSIF: Yes, I think that probably is a sound generalization. I base this on the fact that later I was assigned to the National War College as an instructor. I had two years there where I could see the best representatives from all of the services. The Army, if they were in foreign operations, had a very keen interest in things on the ground. The Navy generally had traveled considerably more and were familiar with ports in the Mediterranean and the Far East. The Air Force, because of their careers, hadn't acquired that deep an appreciation, generally. We had an instructor from the Royal Air Force (RAF) at the Air War College. I was impressed by his broad gauge background. They probably sent one of their best men. But these war colleges are to help get around precisely that problem. I think they do.

Q: In 1963, whither?

JOSIF: Then I was assigned to the Department. I was due for a tour in the Department. They came up with this job as officer in charge of Pakistan and Afghanistan Affairs, which should be right down my line. But I felt uncomfortable this time in South Asian Affairs (SOA). The office director was Turner Cameron and his deputy was Carol Laise. I wasn't happy about that from what I had heard. She had a reputation of being very pro-Indian. She had served under Bunker and, I think, headed the Political Section at New Delhi. By all accounts, he had arranged for her to come back and have this job. Two good officers that I knew well had held those two jobs, as director of South Asian Affairs and deputy director. They were both suddenly dismissed in 1962 and Cameron and Laise were put in. I heard that the senior one, Tom Weil, had somehow alienated our embassy in India, although that is where he had had quite a bit of service, both in Calcutta and Delhi. His deputy, Lee Metcalf, was just a victim of the fact that they wanted to have an opening to put in Carol Laise. That was the background I heard when I rejoined SOA in 1963.

This is a time maybe to mention again the problem of tension between the embassies in Delhi and Karachi. In general, up to that point, I felt that the embassy in Karachi had been shortchanged. The ambassadors there were less distinguished and less influential than most assigned to India, men like Bunker, Galbraith, and Bowles. Bowles was ambassador again during this one-year period when I was officer in charge of Pakistan/Afghanistan affairs. Anyway, it was a period when the Indian side of the equation was predominating and Pakistan seemed out of favor. At NEA staff meetings, I could see that Phillips Talbot, who was the assistant secretary for NEA and a fine gentleman, a scholar and journalist, was deferring constantly to a man who represented the White House, but actually had a background in the CIA, Robert Komer. Komer attended those meetings and everyone noticed, I think, that he weighed in generally for India and getting on, doing things, with India; the assistant secretary almost played second fiddle to him. It was an unusual situation. Phillips Talbot did not have the know-how of Washington bureaucracy. For instance, he recorded his conversations with visiting diplomats himself, instead of having some junior officer there to write up a memo of conversation. His principal deputy for SOA affairs, Jim Grant, was also a newcomer and was most interested in securing more aid to India..

There seemed to be a feeling that Pakistan had been spoiled by our military and economic aid and our political support. And it had an authoritarian government. Anyway, India had been “neglected” and was more important geopolitically and as a democracy. Furthermore, the Chinese border claims on India and Chinese attacks just the winter before created a great “opportunity” to repair our relations with India while containing the Communist Bloc. The idea was that India was so desperate that we could overcome its persistent neutralism. India could be the centerpiece of a new alignment in Asia, maybe even the whole Third World - it was such a big country. But the problem for South Asia hands was that we wanted to achieve all this and yet not alienate Pakistan. Pakistan objected to any military aid to India, especially if it was anything long-term, not just for that particular

occasion. Pakistan also wanted India to change its rigid policy on Kashmir before they would agree to any more bilateral talks with India.

Shortly after I arrived in SOA, there was a big mission to Pakistan by George Ball, who was the under secretary, with Carol Laise along. They were unable to make much headway and sent back a telegram requesting a change in our position. I've forgotten what the details were. But it was my job to coordinate a reply. It was getting late, after 8:00 p.m. It was important enough that our telegram had to be cleared by the Secretary [Dean Rusk], and he was at home. He approved it in draft and I was to have it typed up and sent out, which I did. So I initialed for him. When Carol Laise got back, I heard her complaining to Turner Cameron, “Why did you let Josif initial that telegram?” The telegram had, in effect, torpedoed the Ball mission. Carol Laise was upset about that. So I got off on the wrong foot with her, but it would have happened sooner or later. When I entered the job, I had said, “Look, I haven't been back to Pakistan since 1949 and never in East Pakistan.” So, I asked if I could have a trip out there, also to include Afghanistan. Eventually, SOA gave it to me, but rather grudgingly. Then the word came down about what the new fiscal year's economic aid program would be for India and Pakistan. I thought it was way out of balance in India's favor. About then, late February, I asked to be relieved from that job and something else was arranged. I was only there really from July 1963 to June of 1964.

Q: Did you find sort of a dismissal of the views of whoever was our ambassador in Karachi as opposed to the one in New Delhi... When it would come in through the bureau filter, would you...

JOSIF: I didn't think that Ambassador McConaughy, who probably was as well-qualified as any of the ambassadors to Pakistan, carried the weight of Galbraith or Bowles. One of my tasks was to prod Embassy Karachi to get on with the planning to move from Karachi to Islamabad. They weren't very happy about that at that stage. Islamabad was very undeveloped, an open field practically.

I hope that you might interview Sam Gammon, who was working for Lyndon Johnson when he was Vice President.

Q: He was interviewed some time ago.

JOSIF: I hope he told you the story about Lyndon Johnson's camel driver. Johnson made a big tour, went to Vietnam, India, and Pakistan in early 1961. Being Johnson, he couldn't help campaigning. Driving in from the airport to Karachi, he asked the driver to stop, jumped out of his car and started talking to a camel driver who happened to be there and invited him to come to the States sometime. Well, this camel driver thought he had been touched by the hand of God, I guess. He became spoiled for everything. He didn't go back to camel driving. He started pestering the embassy for favors and money. We did all sorts of things for him. I think he was pensioned off eventually. One of the things we did for him was to bring him to the States as promised. He was so ignorant and yet so arrogant, a difficult combination, that they put one person on him who could speak for him and be with him at all times. The camel driver would regularly complain about the transportation, the accommodations, the cities he had to visit, but this interpreter would translate it all into beautiful, flowing English about how he loved this trip, he thought everything was so smooth, he appreciated being in this wonderful city, and so on.

Q: Were we seeing Pakistan as a military base? By this time, our U2s had stopped. In that period, had the military importance of Pakistan diminished?

JOSIF: The Pentagon seemed to think it was still important and didn't want to lose whatever rights they still had there. I think that once the military has an arrangement, they naturally like to conserve it and build on it. They were wary about the danger of alienating Pakistan, which had done several things for us apart from the U2 base. They had joined CENTO and they had joined SEATO. At one time, quite a lot of weight was put on those two alliances.

Q: What about Afghanistan? That was your responsibility, too. How was Afghanistan at that particular time?

JOSIF: I visited Afghanistan on that trip and saw it really for the first time. I had been up to the Khyber Pass before, but not into Afghanistan proper. From Kabul, I drove north to where they were building a long road tunnel. This was a Russian aid project, to build a tunnel through the ridge of the Hindu Kush mountains to ease traffic north and south. That, of course, was a very strategic benefit to Russia and undermined the defense potential of that great mountain range. I had been interested in Afghanistan since I was in SAIS getting my MA. I wrote my thesis there on the emergence of Afghanistan as a state in modern times. I was fascinated by the way this poor, desolate country managed to keep its independence all through the colonial period. Neither the Russians nor the British were able to conquer it, though they tried at times. My conclusion was that Afghanistan had been molded by the pressures of the expanding Russians from the north and the British from the south. It had emerged as a buffer state, primarily under British influence. But the British learned in the most painful way through the first two Afghan wars that it was not worth owning the country. In the 1830s, they had sent an army in there. Ostensibly, it was very successful. Then the Afghans rebelled and through their guerrilla tactics killed all but one British officer. Then again in the 1880s, the British had a similar experience. Both times, they returned and reconquered, but by then they were so fed up with Afghanistan they decided to let it be. In fact, they let the same ruler that had disappointed them in the first place stay on the throne. Then after the third Afghan war, they finally recognized Afghan independence. That was in 1919.

In the 1960s, we enjoyed much less local leverage than the British had held in colonial times. I believe it was our tacit assumption, therefore, that if push came to shove, we couldn't save this country. They were too close to the Soviet Union and we were too far away. We would have to work through some other country - Iran, Pakistan, or both. I think this was reflected in our aid program. Our aid programs there were modest and into basic

things like irrigation in the Helmand Valley. We weren't making an all-out effort to save this bit of territory from the communist world. Of course, it turned out that way in the late 1970s when the Russians, one way or another, took over. But they too had that experience that the British had and eventually pulled out.

In 1964, I was assigned to the National War College as an instructor, as a faculty member in the Political Department. The second year I was there, I was the chief of the Political Department and supervised a colonel and three American college professors. I worked under the commandant and the State Department advisor.

My first year, I think I worked basically on revising one of their key courses, namely the one on the formulation of national security policy, the machinery, the process, committees, and so on, and then the influences on them - how decisions are actually made in theory and practice, considering the interest groups that are involved and the media. I thought we developed some pretty good materials. In addition, each faculty member led a seminar. We had a lot of contact with the students.

As a faculty member, I took a trip each year, one trip to Europe that included major capitals and Berlin. Another one was to the Near East. That included Israel and several of the Arab states.

During this period, 1964-1966, the military and much of the country had Vietnam uppermost in its mind. There was a lot of discussion about it in our seminars. Personally, I felt that we were making a great mistake in challenging local nationalism on mainland Asia. Since I was raised in Burma, I knew that we make a very conspicuous presence when we're in that part of the world. Most of us have big white, or black, faces and we stand out like aliens. We just don't meld into the picture. Of course, the supply of manpower in Asia was limitless. It reminded me somewhat of the Korean War situation. I thought the threat of China was exaggerated, however. There seemed to be animosity between the Vietnamese and China actually. We had to draw up an essay question for

each officer at the War College. We gave them a real tough poser about Vietnam. In effect, we made them ask themselves, “Is it worth the candle?” We got a wide variety of answers even then. A surprising number were far from gung ho.

So that was my War College interlude. I finished out my four yearin the States and was due for an overseas assignment.

I was asked by Ambassador Raymond Thurston, whom I had known slightly from South Asian experience, to be his DCM at Mogadiscio, Somalia. That was my next post.

Q: You went out there when?

JOSIF: In 1966.

Q: You were in Somalia from 1966 to when?

JOSIF: To 1969. I was there three and a quarter years.

First, I took a week of sensitivity training at Yale. This was an innovation of Bill Crockett, the senior administrator in the Department. There was a professor at Yale called Chris Argyris. He was a psychologist of some sort and his pet theory was that most bureaucracies are too much a matter of giving direction from the top down; there should be more bubbling up. Anyway, I was assigned to his seminar along with some very high-powered people: Fred Hadsel, who later became ambassador to a couple African posts; George V. Allen, who had been assistant secretary in NEA, ambassador to India and Iran, and USIA director; and some high administrative officers from the Department. It was all to a good purpose: engender a group management outlook and style. Away with hierarchy-based direction - to candor, openness to feedback, a persuasive approach, and respect for administrators and subordinates. The format was immersion in seminar discussions for many hours every day. We had a lot of fun - at first, at least. Personally, I thought that Chris Argyris and the staff exaggerated the problems in the Foreign Service. They seemed

to think we were all in denial, defensive, and conceited. This encouraged self-criticism. One participant cracked, “The average FSO licks up and chews down.” Another one said, “He has an even disposition. He's always mad.” Argyris in particular decried any tension between substantive and administrative officers and sought to expose it within the group. He detected that I differed somewhat with him. I held that administrative functions were in support of substantive goals. That was just my philosophy. I had always tended to set goals and think of how you reach them. I expressed that. He lit into me. Finally, I appealed (as a matter of self-protection) to a right of silence. He got angry and said, “All right. You may go. Leave the seminar for Washington immediately.” At that point, George Allen said, “If Mr. Josif is forced to leave, I'll go, too.” The subject was dropped.

Q: This was one of the problems. There are continual ideas coming up, all of which have a certain amount of value, but often they were pursued to the point of ineffectiveness or there were so many sort of pet hobby...

JOSIF: Yes. That was the impression I had. Chris Argyris had a point, but I think he carried it to an extreme. Maybe this is one of mypet peeves. I have the same feeling about security. We seem to have gone overboard now. My feeling is, if you carry physical security to the extreme, you interfere with the goals and operations of the mission. I'll tell you more about that when I come to my last post, Libya.

Q: Why don't we go to Mogadiscio? You were there from 1966-1969.

JOSIF: Right. From about July 1966 to November 1969, about three and a quarter years.

Q: What was Somalia like at that time?

JOSIF: Somalia was a promising country almost. In Africa, I think it was perhaps the only country you could call a democracy. It had a freely elected parliament. It had a prime minister who enjoyed a majority in parliament. They had a president who was directly elected. It had some advantages over most African countries. It had complete unity of

language, namely the Somali language; of religion, namely Sunni Islam; not entirely uniform physical ethnicity, but close to it; and certainly a history of shared oral tradition and culture. Differences began to arise during the colonial period when the British took the north and the Italians took the southern parts. What the Somalis lacked desperately was experience in running a government. In the pre-colonial period, right through the 19th century, there had been no such thing as a Somali government of any sort. What experience they had was from colonial governance.

The basic social organization was provided by the family, the clan, and the tribe. I asked the embassy political officer to draw up a basic report on the tribal picture in Somalia. He produced a very long, detailed report. I didn't study it carefully. I was busy. I signed off on it. I should have perhaps emphasized the importance of this subject in an executive summary of a page or two. Anyway, when I was in Washington later, I was called in by an office that reviews despatches and told that that report was much too long. The implication was that this wasn't all that important. Well, maybe it could have been a better report, but it certainly was an important subject. Tribalism is why the country disintegrated in the 1990s.

We had a big mission in Mogadiscio. We had a fairly large AID program, modest by comparison maybe to many African countries like Ethiopia, our neighbor, but we had an agricultural research program and an educational program training schoolteachers. We had a fairly big USIS and a considerable Peace Corps, and a consulate in Hargeisa which I supervised.

In January 1968, we had a visit by Vice President Hubert Humphrey. We got notice of this maybe a month in advance. I happened to be in charge then. Ambassador Thurston was in the States. So the planning fell on me. I mobilized the whole mission, AID and USIS. There was going to be an overnight visit. It was a strain on our logistics, but we thought it was great. Humphrey was certainly the highest ranking American ever to visit or likely to visit Somalia. Then the trouble began.

Humphrey had a couple other African posts to visit before he came to us. He and his party were beginning to get tired. They were in Addis Ababa when a couple of advance men came from the Secret Service and asked questions about security in the country. Their reports convinced Mr. Humphrey that his visit to Mogadiscio should be canceled. Well, I hit the ceiling. I was still in charge. The ambassador wasn't arriving until the day before Humphrey was due. I said, “No, you cannot do this. This is a democratic country we are trying to support. They have been looking forward to your visit. There is no serious security problem.” What they cited by way of evidence was that there were two members of the parliament who were communist or leftist of some sort. Well, it would be pretty hard to find a legislature in many countries that didn't have a couple. The key security point, from my experience was the attitude of the government. The government was really looking forward to this visit. They were, of course, hoping for some aid to result. Anyway, it was good publicity for them. We had a prime minister who was very friendly to us.Finally, Humphrey made the right decision. He said, “Okay, I'll come, but I won't stay overnight.” So, he arrived. With him was a large American press contingent, reporters from The New York Times, The Washington Post,” and others. They were just astounded by the friendliness of the reception at the airport. The government had turned out tribesmen who were colorful and very enthusiastic. It was a marvelous reception. But the press had heard that this visit was once canceled, there was a security problem here, the people were not friendly, and so on, so they asked our USIS people, “How do you account for this discrepancy?” USIS ducked and said, “Well, talk to Mr. Josif.” USIS arranged for them as a group to meet with me at the embassy. I told them, “Well, the embassy can't be held responsible for any misinformation that may have reached the Vice President's group before they arrived. We've always reported that the visit would be very friendly and we didn't see any serious problem.” I did not identify the Secret Service as the source of the misinformation, but the press put two and two together. Their published reports were basically about a very friendly visit, but they also mentioned that the visit had once been canceled on security grounds, apparently because of the Secret Service.

Humphrey was delighted with his reception, but not with its press coverage. As he was flying to Nairobi, the next stop, his chief of staff apparently persuaded him to send a telegram (They had seen The New York Times report by this time.) that “Mr. Josif should be discharged from the Foreign Service if he cannot explain why he made such comments.” Well, luckily, my ambassador, Ray Thurston, supported me 100% and said, “He was just doing his job,” and so on. Humphrey dropped the demand. But he was angry, at least he or his chief of staff.

Q: Often it's the chief of staff. They get out on a limb and thethey can't stand it if they're proved wrong.

JOSIF: That was one crisis I had. Ironically, I later received a Meritorious Honor Award for “outstanding contributions” to the successful visit of the Vice President to Somalia.

Then in 1969 Ray Thurston left and there was a gap of about six months when I was in charge before Fred Hadsel arrived as the new ambassador. During this period, there was a crisis at the AID-run agricultural research station. All of the Americans and other staff there quit and wouldn't return to work until security was improved. It seemed that they had been threatened, and one of their local employees had actually been roughed up, by local villagers who wanted more jobs on the premises. Alleged anti-Americanism was also involved. The director of that institution had called on the minister of agriculture, but nothing seemed to be happening. This had been going on for a week. So, finally, I decided that what was needed was a demonstration that we're not afraid to go back to work here. I went with my driver and the embassy car with the flag flying, drove there, made a tour of the vacant station, and drove back and told people about it. That got them back to work, as I think it shamed them. I never reported the incident to the Department.

Another interesting thing happened. Our Moon landing occurred in July of 1969. We put up some pictures of it in our USIS display case on the front of the embassy, which was on a downtown street, right on the street. There was a lot of discussion on the sidewalk

among a crowd of people looking at this display case. I asked what they were saying and it was reported to me, “They're having arguments about whether this is for real or just a fake.” The skeptics seemed to have the upper hand. Could people land on the Moon? My wife was taking some Arabic lessons at that point. I asked her instructor if he could come up with some verses of the Koran that we could use to imply that this was part of a legitimate scientific, worldwide effort. Surely Mohammad had spoken in favor of broadening knowledge. A couple verses were found and added to the display case. That seemed to have a very good effect and it added to the credibility of our USIS.

Q: Did the Arab-Israeli 1967 War affect you? You have two things. You have the relations with Arab countries, which were strained. Also, the Canal was shot.

JOSIF: Right. Yes. We were isolated there. Air travel was cut off. Basically, we got in and out of Somalia through air connections to Europe. The Canal was closed and so on. But I don't remember that we had any physical hardships. We were concerned about local reactions to Israeli advances and victory. There was some tension there, but again, the attitude of the government, although it was a member of the Arab League, was moderate. We felt fortunate t hat we got through that period without any serious disorder.

One of the things that occurred while I was there was that the British decided to reestablish a diplomatic mission in Mogadiscio. The man sent out to arrange for it was Sir Malcolm McDonald, who had been high commissioner to Kenya, among other things, and a cabinet minister in London. He asked for our help, in communications for instance. His main concern in talking to the Somalis was to make sure that they understood that if the British reopened a mission, it would not mean that they were promising any aid.

The last crisis while I was there was the coup d'#tat by which the Army under General Siad Barre overthrew the parliamentary government. Actually, it happened overnight, but I was entertaining Sir Malcolm McDonald that evening. Fred Hadsel had recently arrived. I got called out by our Somali political assistant, who said, “Something is going on. (He wasn't

quite sure what.) It might be a coup." Sure enough, in the early hours of the morning, I got a phone call that there were troops on the street and it looked like a coup was underway. So, I got dressed hurriedly and drove down to the embassy; the streets were empty except for troops. As I was about half a block from the embassy, one of them shouted "Halt" and raised his rifle and pointed it at me. Probably the most courageous or most stupid thing I did in my life... I just kept on driving, parked in front of the embassy, jumped out, and ran in. I felt that if it were a coup, as it apparently was, there had to be a senior officer in the chancery. Sure enough, the ambassador couldn't reach the embassy. We were in touch by walkie talkie radios only. I was holding down the fort there, you might say, for a couple days. My wife would send down lunches with our driver. It was a rather sad period. One of the most disheartening things was to see some of the people we had been doing business with in the foreign office just disappear, or go to jail as political prisoners. It wasn't a particularly bloody coup, but it was pretty thorough. Siad Barre eventually failed because he was so thorough. He favored his own clansmen and alienated people of other clans and tribes.

Q: There has been this sort of backwards and forwards thing between us and the Soviet Union over Ethiopia. Can you talk about the view as seen by our embassy in Mogadiscio about relations with Ethiopia and the military presence and all that and the Soviets?

JOSIF: Yes. I think both sides considered Ethiopia to be one of the prizes in the Cold War. Somalia was very much a sideshow. We had an ambassador in Ethiopia while I was in Somalia who advanced the theory to the Department quite persuasively I think, that we should concentrate our efforts in Africa on the important states and not fritter away our aid and political leverage on minor countries, like Somalia in particular. Of course, we had a somewhat different view in Mogadiscio. Our clients at that time had a parliament, an elected prime minister, and an elected president; we felt we had at least half a case. This was sort of a democracy. But we got the short end of the stick on aid. The best that we could do in the areas of security ties, for instance, was to give some modest support to the national police. In Somalia, they had the European-style police force, which was a

national police force. They were equipped with some light weapons, trucks, and generally non-provocative items. Aid to the Somali military was out of the question. I think we did send them some trucks in the early '60s, but nothing of any dangerous import, whereas we had a large and continuing military aid program in Ethiopia. There were some geopolitical reasons for it. For instance, we had a large radio monitoring and broadcast facility in Eritrea near Asmara, the capital. I visited it once.

Q: Kagnew Station, the whole part of Africa rotated around it as far as American policy was concerned.

JOSIF: Yes. I must say, I was a little annoyed when I went there. It wasn't an official visit, but I asked for a briefing at the base and was given only an unclassified version.

At one point when I was in charge during that six months, there was also a charg# in Addis Ababa and another one in Nairobi. I proposed to the Department that they authorize a conference of the three charg#s at Mogadiscio. They agreed to that. There was a history of conflicting recommendations coming from these three posts. It was partly because of the Somali irredentism. You see, Somalia when it was formed was created out of British and Italian Somaliland, but Somalis felt that there were really five parts of Somalia; three were yet to come. One was French Somaliland, Djibouti. Another was the part of Ethiopia, the Ogaden, that projects into Somalia. Then there was the northeastern province of Kenya. Their flag showed the five pointed star. Sometimes, there were reasons why our neighbors should be anti-Somali, because the Somalis were misbehaving. Generally, it was just on a tribal basis, but once or twice the Somali government tried to mount a semi-military operation.

Q: Were the Soviets fishing in those waters at that point?

JOSIF: Well, yes, because when we turned down the Somali military on aid, they turned to the Soviets and received some aid from them. They had some Soviet tanks, for in stance. The Soviet presence did not seem to be very impressive. We noticed that there

was rivalry between the Soviets and the Chinese. The last month I was there, we got the impression the Chinese were getting the upper hand. For instance, they put on a play in the national theater in town which was pure propaganda, apparently, and may have even been designed to prod the Somali military to take over. The coup that I referred to did occur just a few days after this play was put on, which was a striking coincidence at least. I don't think that we or the Soviets felt that, when push came to shove, Somalia was worth Ethiopia. If you lost Somalia and gained in Ethiopia, you were ahead. Given that sort of a see-saw relationship there, if you were making way in one country, you were probably losing it in the other. Most bets were on Ethiopia.

Q: Did you feel that in reporting and influence in Washington, that Ethiopia was outweighing you like India and Pakistan?

JOSIF: Oh, yes, definitely. Ethiopia could hold high cards in population, economy, location, Kagnew, and OAU headquarters. So there was really no contest there.

This reminds me of an amusing incident at Mogadiscio. Prime Minister Mohammad Egal was a northerner, spoke good English, and was married to a nurse, herself quite Westernized. He was probably the most modern Somali there was in the country at that time. He called me up. I was charg#. He said, “My wife and I are leaving for an election tour in the bush in three days. I hesitate to mention this to you, but I've seen in the Sears catalogue a picture of a nice portable toilet that could be used on such an expedition. We'll be staying out in the bush.” I said, “Well, I'll do what I can, Sir. It's too late to order anything from Sears Roebuck or anybody else, but maybe we can do something here at the embassy.” So, we found a toilet seat and cover and had the carpenter make a box and provided it with a removable pot underneath. Of course, it had to be painted, too. It was still reeking of fresh paint when I delivered it to the prime minister's residence personally on the morning he was leaving. He was very grateful for it. I reported this episode by wire to our usual addressees, under the heading “Operation Thunderbox.” I understand it was read in the AF staff meeting to great amusement of the African Affairs staff.

But our ambassador to Addis Ababa was put out that I was wastingovernment money on such frivolity.

Q: When you left there in 1969, what was your feeling about whithe Somalia?

JOSIF: Well, I was pessimistic. They had just had this coup. I left a month after the coup. Some of the best people in the country had been jailed. Others had been afraid to come back to the country. I didn't think General Said would be a very bloody dictator, but he would be methodical. In these small countries, you know everybody. He had been to our house, and the ambassador's house. We all knew the head of the Army, the head of the police, and so on. One of the discouraging things was that he jailed the head of the police, who was a really fine Western-oriented gentleman, as well as a devout Muslim, General Mohammed Abshir. He was jailed because it was the Army versus the police to some extent. The Army was considered pro-Soviet by reputation and aid. The police were pro-American because of General Abshir and our aid to them. He was in jail for many years, I understand, but wound up being the warlord in his home region. He is the chief of Somalia's northeast corner that sticks out into the Indian Ocean.

General Siad Barre ruled for almost 20 years. I can't say that I predicted the fall of his government, but I wasn't surprised when it fell apart on tribal lines.

Q: This was 1969. Where did you go?

JOSIF: I got a direct transfer to Tripoli, Libya, as the DCM. In September, I had been called back briefly to the Department to meet with Ambassador Joe Palmer, who was the new ambassador to Tripoli. So, I got this direct transfer. I went ahead. My wife had to pack up and come later on.

Our official relations with Libya had just been set back by Muammar Qadhafi's coup of September 1. Overnight, they went from cosy to uncomfortable. When I arrived, we still had a big operation in Libya. It was true that we no longer had an AID mission, but we had

just about everything else. We had a large military attach# outfit, USIS, and a consulate in Benghazi.

A total of 85 Americans were connected to the embassy. The American community numbered about 6,000, almost entirely in the oil industry. Then we had Wheelus Air Base. That had another 5-6,000. It was the largest American air base in the world in terms of area. It was the main training base for American Air Force pilots assigned to Europe. Because of the bad flying conditions in Northern Europe and the very good flying conditions in Libya, they were regularly rotating in and out to improve their skills in bombing and other things. But Qadhafi's revolution resulted immediately in a demand that we leave Wheelus. Part of the background on this is that in 1967 at the time of the Arab-Israeli War, the embassy decided because of the threat of riots and anti-American feeling to evacuate most Americans. They evacuated them through Wheelus, then entirely under our control. I think this was one of the many reasons why Libyans, Qadhafi in particular, were suspicious of our presence. Qadhafi had a lot of reasons to dislike us. He was an Arab nationalist. He thought we were responsible for Israel's existence and certainly its success. He was a firm believer that if the Arabs would just unite, they had the numbers, they had the oil wealth, the location, the other resources, so that they could drive the Israelis into the sea if it weren't for the Americans in particular and the West in general. Anyway, he immediately demanded that we leave Wheelus. This was our first big problem. It occupied us completely for months. We, the whole U.S. government, knew that there wouldn't be any peace about Wheelus unless we just left. We were there on a lease basis. The lease was to expire in about a year and a half. Considering time for closing in a normal way, there wasn't much operating time left at Wheelus anyway. The Pentagon, everyone, signed off on the position that we would negotiate an evacuation of Wheelus, but try to get the best terms we could on the incidentals like the timing (We would like to have as long a time as possible to get out.). We also hoped that the Libyans would want to buy a lot of the equipment and facilities there, and that our children at the American school would be allowed to finish the school year, for instance. Well, the negotiations were held

at a downtown building. I went down with the ambassador and our staff. We had several Arabic-speaking officers: the head of the Political Section, the head of the Economic Section, and at least two others, one in USIS. The building was mobbed. Our car was barely able to get through. People were shaking their fists at the car windows. We went up to this room and met a group of military officers there. The head was Major Jaluud. He was Qadhafi's deputy. Several officers were wearing sidearms. Of course, we were completely unarmed. Jaluud kept in touch with Qadhafi by phone. He would occasionally leave the room and place a call to Qadhafi.

Well, the upshot was that we agreed to turn over Wheelus on June 11, 1970. In other words, we were given about six months to get out. That was the end of the school year. One of the only arguments that seemed to influence Jaluud was that our schoolchildren deserved to finish the school year before we left. He agreed to pay for some things at the base and not others. It was a very complex agreement. We also received promises from the foreign office that the ceremony of turnover would be a military function, respectful to both sides. There wouldn't be any civilian crowds or demonstrations. Well, it turned out they invited the local village elders. This violated the agreement. I got pretty angry about that. But it was with a sense of relief also that the embassy could wire back, after our last plane took off, “Wheels up, Wheelus.”

The next stage in our relations stemmed from the fact that the ambassador had apparently received encouragement in Washington for his idea that since Qadhafi was basically a nationalist and non-communist, he was worth cultivating. It was true that he had hurt our interests with respect to Wheelus, but maybe we could “establish a new relationship.” The basis for this new relationship would be that we would offer extensive technical assistance to Libya on a reimbursable basis. The theory was that here was a rich country that was very poor in technical skills. Foreigners were really running almost everything that took high technical capacity, the oil industry particularly, which was their great resource. So, they could use competent technical assistance, which we had plenty of, on things like improving the water supply, locating more water, agricultural technical assistance,

transportation planning, and so on. The ambassador made a big thing offering this in meetings with Jaluud, and by going back to Washington to get instructions and details ironed out. He persisted for months. He was more patient than I thought justified. I felt that there was very little to hope for. There was just too much deep-seated animosity towards the West, towards us in particular because of the Arab-Israeli thing, because of Libya's colonial experience, even because of Libyan xenophobia. Libya is the most xenophobic country that I've ever been in. It's a country that is sparsely populated. It was easily conquered by the Ottomans and the Italians and then the British came in, and the French, in World War II. After independence, we had the dominating role there. We were the chief prop to the king. So, as the leader of a revolutionary coup, Qadhafi wasn't very keen on seeing us hang around at all.

Anyway, this effort to establish a new relationship failed completely. The Libyans might admit that, yes, they needed technical assistance, but they didn't want a program. If they wanted any help, they would ask for it. They said, “Thank you, but no thanks,” in effect. So, there was coolness. In fact, there was continuing hostility and even provocation, certainly on Libya's part and maybe on ours, too. There was continued squeezing of American property interests. For instance, shortly after the revolution, they nationalized a mission hospital in Benghazi. It happened to be a Seventh Day Adventist hospital. The Adventists estimated that it was worth a million dollars. They never got a cent out of it. The same goes for the American community church in Tripoli.

But the main interest was the oil industry, dominated by American companies. The Libyans completely nationalized Nelson Bunker Hunt's operation, for instance. They just took a majority interest in some other American companies. They started squeezing all of the companies for higher prices. They were successful. Because of Libya's location on the Mediterranean, a short distance from Europe, and the fact that Libyan oil is unusually sweet, low in sulfur content, they were in an excellent bargaining position. The Shah about the same time was pressing for price increases anyway. The OPEC arrangement was working at that point, 1969-1973 while I was there. Prices rose and the return that Libya

received rose astronomically. Within a year, I think, it had quadrupled. I remember once when an American oil company was nationalized, I happened to go to the airport for some ceremony. I saw the oil minister waiting there, so I accosted him and said, “Look, we as a government do not fundamentally object to the nationalization of a national resource, but we expect our citizens to receive prompt, adequate, and effective compensation.” I reported this to the Department briefly. They complimented me on my prompt action, but nothing else happened. The fact was, as I soon learned, that the American oil companies (and the Europeans for that matter) valued access to the oil more than ownership. They didn't care particularly if they were nationalized as long as they could keep selling that oil and have the downstream benefits.

As to our official relations, they went from bad to worse. Apart from squeezing American property interests, there was constant criticism of U.S. policy, especially on the Middle East. Two rock-throwing demonstrations were directed against our embassy. Then there were Qadhafi's adventures abroad, his military buildup and his shows of muscle in Chad, for instance. And what particularly concerned us was that he started claiming territorial waters out to as much as 200 miles. Regarding the Gulf of Sidra, also called Sirte, he claimed that the line of Libyan sovereignty went from the cape on the east to the cape on the west. Of course, we maintained that we only recognized the 12 mile limit.

But we did a couple things that must have been very irritating to them. They, for instance, wanted to import some C-130 cargo planes. We warned them, “Well, okay, you can order them, but you'll have to get an export license and we can't guarantee that.” Well, they ordered them and paid for them, but then we embargoed them. So, there was a continuing dispute.

Q: I think they're still sitting in Marietta, Georgia.

JOSIF: Yes. We were suspicious about them partly because they werdual use.

Q: They were. That was Qadhafi's military plane.

JOSIF: Right. And Qadhafi was exporting his support for terrorism. He seemed to have worldwide interests. He was supporting Muslims in Mindanao in the Philippines. He supported the IRA in Ireland and all sorts of shenanigans in other Arab and African countries.

Q: Were we looking at Qadhafi at this time to figure out what made him tic outside of being a nationalist?

JOSIF: Yes, this was one of our preoccupations. The problem was that very few people saw Qadhafi. Our ambassador only met him for a talk when he presented his credentials and when he left. He was complimented really in that he was given an exit interview. Most ambassadors left without seeing Qadhafi. I remember, an agency here in Washington sent us a psychiatric profile of him. This was probably in 1972. It was so bad that we decided not to comment on it. If we started fiddling and commenting on it, that would indicate we approved of it basically. So I was persuaded not to try. I don't think we Westerners have a grasp of somebody like that. When I came back after this tour and was debriefed, one of the leading questions was, “Is Qadhafi crazy?” I said, “Well, he's odd. He's different. He may be crazy even, but he's not ineffective. On the contrary, he is very effective as a Libyan leader. He knows the local scene. Hknows what he wants. He knows how to get it. That's what counts. Barring some accident or assassination, he's going to last.” Obviously, the ultimate decisions were all made by Qadhafi. It was almost useless, literally, to talk to the foreign office or to the oil minister or anybody else. American businessmen learned this. They didn't even bother the embassy after a while. They developed their own relationship with the oil minister or whoever was important to them.

Q: Did we have some young officers who spoke Arabic and were the getting out and around? Were they of any value?

JOSIF: Well, not in that way. They were invaluable in that they could interpret when we had the negotiations about Wheelus, for instance. The military officers in the Revolutionary Command Council by and large didn't speak English or any other language we knew. We were all very restricted in our contacts. The average Libyan, I think, was afraid to be seen talking to American embassy officers. People who knew Arabic were particularly suspect. My wife happens to speak Arabic. Unlike me, she would be followed on the street when she went shopping and so on. They knew that she knew Arabic. This led to an amusing incident. She went up to an ordinary uniformed policeman and said, “That man is following me.” He got very angry and rushed over to the offender, but the man showed him something that silenced him instantly. Apparently, he was a secret service man and showed him his identification.

Q: While all this was going on, quite a few Libyan students were ithe United States.

JOSIF: Yes. There was an ambiguity about Libya then. It was that despite our political differences, they wanted American equipment and even operating personnel for their oil industry and they valued American education more than any other (British or any European). So we had a very large visa operation, especially for students. They had the money, generally speaking. Most of them had government scholarships. We were happy to let them get to the United States. They studied almost anything they wanted. I am afraid some of them studied atomic science, which perhaps wasn't so smart. But given our system, you can hardly prevent that.

Our consul, I thought, had an unusual listening post in that he would talk to these people regularly every day, and they were the cream of this society.

Q: Who was our consul there?

JOSIF: Well, we had a series. Joe Basile was the one when I arrived. Then there were two others in succession. They sometimes reported interesting information gleaned from our visa applicants.

Q: You left there in 1974.

JOSIF: Actually, it was December 1973.

Q: What were the Soviets doing during this time?

JOSIF: I think they were about as puzzled by Qadhafi as we were, but saw an opening in that we were having such difficulties. After I left, it became known that they had made a very large military supply agreement with Libya. It amounted to billions of dollars worth of imports of tanks and whatnot. We knew they had some military connections, but not on that scale. But the Soviets had their difficulties, too. For instance, in 1972, we, the Soviets, and the British each received a note from the foreign office demanding that we reduce our staff (that is, our home staff) to 15. We still had 45 Americans at that point. In a little over a month, we slimmed down to 15. We closed our last outpost, which was Benghazi. Then we eliminated the whole Marine security contingent. Our security rested, I felt, on the attitude of the local government. If they wanted to invade the embassy, they could do it. If they didn't, we had some chance. This was imposed on the British and the Russians as well as us, so we couldn't very well claim discrimination. We reduced other staff. I won't go into all the details, but in effect it included the ambassador. Joseph Palmer decided to retire. He left at the end of 1972 and was never replaced.

During the year that I was in charge at Tripoli, from December 1972 to December 1973, one big issue was Arabic in passports. At the end of 1972, we received a note from the foreign office declaring that from now on, foreign nationals entering Libya must show passports printed in Arabic among the languages used. The local diplomatic corps was shocked at this sudden, sweeping ruling, obviously dictated by Qadhafi. Compliance

would set a bad precedent. Here, if the Arabs got Arabic, the Bulgarians would want Bulgarian, and so on endlessly. The Department supported our position that we resist this. Of course, it immediately led to problems. I had to send the consular officer out to the airport continually to try to get some Americans in who didn't have Arabic in their passports. The Libyans soon realized that enforcing the rule 100% would hurt their oil industry and their revenue, so they began to make some exceptions for key people, but not their families. It was a mess. We spent a lot of time trying to help families. Feeling that there should be international cooperation on such a problem, I decided that it would be good to ask the Swiss charg# to co-chair a meeting with me and we would invite other missions to send somebody. We had such a meeting, well-attended. Everyone, I think, felt the same way, that this new rule should be resisted. But almost everyone else seemed to look for a compromise or hope for special treatment with the relatively few problems they had. I was not impressed by their guts, frankly. Of course, as the Libyan foreign ministry told me, within an hour of my meeting, they knew all that had happened there. The Department was strangely silent about this effort. They supported a firm stand in principle, but it began to get increasingly costly. One of my key officers, the economic officer, happened to have a girlfriend in Tunis. He went over there just before we received a note requiring even accredited diplomats to have Arabic in passports. He came back to Tripoli and they wouldn't let him back in the country. So, I sent my Political Section chief out to talk to Immigration and try to persuade them to let him in. He didn't succeed. So, I lost my economic officer (I actually had him go to Egypt and then try again to come in, but they were adamant.). I also lost my political officer. We received a note PNGing him for his efforts with Immigration.

In February 1973, a Libyan Airlines plane was shot down by the Israelis. All on board were killed. One of the passengers was a former foreign minister that we had dealt with. The pilot and, I think, the co-pilot too, was French. I remember, the French were having a cocktail party that evening. I learned about it just before attending and was the one who informed the French ambassador. Later, in early March, I had a meeting with the

foreign minister. He wanted to talk to me about this Arabic in passport issue, because there was some high government official who wanted to get his son into the States. We had retaliated against the Libyans by restricting our student visas. “If you don't let us into your country, we're not going to let you into ours,” was the idea. So, he called me in on rather short notice and I sent a cable to the Department asking if I could go beyond what the Department spokesman had said about the Israeli action. He had merely said that we regretted the loss of life (We didn't regret how the incident occurred.). The reply came back, “No, you stick to what the Department spokesman said.” I must say, I was tempted to go beyond my instructions, but decided as a good soldier, I would not. Of course, the minister noticed the paucity of my official regrets.

Q: Well, it was a bad thing. I mean, the Israelis were pretty sure this was a passenger plane.

JOSIF: Yes. It was a Boeing civil airliner flying from Tripoli to Cairo. The pilot met hazy conditions. He overflew the Nile, which was his landmark and instead got the Suez Canal, so he was flying north up the Suez Canal to the airport, which he expected was slightly to the right. Of course, that was slightly in Israeli-held territory. They shot it down, despite the fact that their fighter planes flew alongside for a while.

That was a key meeting I had with the Libyan foreign minister. His name was Mansour Kikhya. He was a very decent man, of a good family in Benghazi, and schooled in France. He had had a reputation before the revolution of being a mildly leftist type. Then he supported Qadhafi in the early '70s. Later, he defected from Libya, came to the United States, and was, I think, in the process of becoming an American citizen. In 1993, he made the mistake of visiting Cairo for a conference of Libyan opposition figures. There, he was kidnapped, apparently by Libyan agents, and reportedly assassinated in secret.

In the spring of 1973, because of our general ineffectiveness, and the passports in Arabic problem, I recommended that we just close the embassy. I was turned down very promptly

by Washington. They said that while it was true that we couldn't be effective under current circumstances, once we closed an embassy, it would be very difficult to reopen. So, we stuck it out. We were unable to leave the country for any reason because we couldn't get back in. My wife's father died that fall. She wanted to go back for the funeral. We decided she should do so, even though she might not be able to return to post.

Then the war of October 1973, the Arab-Israeli War, broke out. While that was going on, the Department capitulated, really, about passports in Arabic and agreed that we would have Arabic in passports to this extent: when an American wanted to go to Libya, a page of his or her passport would be filled by a rubber stamp with Arabic phrases for Name, Date, and Place of Birth, and Passport Number and Date. The traveler could then take the passport to an approved translator to supply those items in Arabic on that page. That would be presented to the Libyans. In other words, we wouldn't print our passports in Arabic, but some basic data could be presented in Arabic. This was an acceptable solution. I hadn't proposed it, but the Department just decided that enough was enough. It's a good thing they did because the embassy was really run down. There were a lot of us there who were way over our tours of duty. Everyone needed at least some leave out of country. We were holding the fort until we could be replaced. We had had no new personnel for a year.

Because of the local American experience in the '67 War, I think there was an expectation in the American community, still several thousand strong, that if another Arab-Israeli war broke out, the embassy would evacuate them. Well, I had taken the precaution of bringing the leading American companies into our emergency planning. One of the main points that I made was that “Wheelus is gone. There is not going to be any official American airlift. We are just going to have to stay here. Our security will rest upon the attitude of the Libyan government.” Regarding the embassy's own security, I had the shutters all covered with steel plate so that, when they were shut, stones would just bounce off. They wouldn't break windows. I also arranged for a door that was in the back of the embassy that led to a patio that led to an apartment building to be available at all times, so that if a

mob was coming in the front door, we could get out that way. That was actually used later when the embassy was attacked and burned. I also established and enforced a rule that nobody keeps more classified papers than they can carry under one arm upstairs to the burn barrels, where they could be disposed of within minutes.

Anyway, much to our surprise, there were no demonstrations against us in October 1973. We heard that Qadhafi was preoccupied with Sadat and furious at him for not letting the Libyans in on Egyptian war plans. I think he just forgot about us despite our aid to the Israelis on this occasion. Kissinger was bending over backwards to send them everything they needed and wanted. But Qadhafi apparently considered our little Embassy Tripoli as beneath his attention - at that point. In 1979, he had it entered and burned by a mob.

That is basically my story in the Foreign Service. I came back in 1974. I had been in class too long. I was also quite fed up and didn't want to have anything to do with any big bureaucracy anymore. I left the Service at the end of March.

Q: In a way, you certainly were in some difficult spots.

JOSIF: I was.

Q: Just briefly, what sort of things did you occupy yourself with after you got out?

JOSIF: I am frequently asked this. It is hard to account for where the time has gone. I have given a few talks. One of the professors that I supervised at the War College invited me down every year to talk to his international relations classes at Washington and Lee. I've spent time on such things as helping the elderly in our family. My mother and mother-in-law needed quite a bit of attention. I save money by doing most of the maintenance on the car, the yard, and the house. I do a lot of reading and play tennis. I feel very privileged that I have lasted this long. One Foreign Service officer we knew died within a month of his retirement. I have had the luck to live now for many years in relative calm. It's been a great experience.

Q: Well, anyway, you've been around.

JOSIF: Friends tell me that “when you were transferred from Mogadiscio to Tripoli, you went from the frying pan into the fire.” That was about it.

Q: Who was the ambassador in Tripoli when you were there?

JOSIF: Joe Palmer.

Q: I think it was the desk officer who went out there and was saying he had the distinction of Joe Palmer coming up and saying, “What is Libya going to be like? I'm ready to retire soon and I don't want...” He said, “Oh, it's very quiet and very nice and all.”

JOSIF: That was before the revolution.

Q: Just before the revolution. Great.

End of interview